·RIVERSIDE·BOOKSHELF·

◦ SHE ◦ BLOWS! ◦
◦ AND ◦ SPARM ◦ AT ◦ THAT! ◦

◦ WILLIAM ◦ JOHN ◦ HOPKINS ◦

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HARPOONING PORPOISE

RIVERSIDE BOOKSHELF

SHE BLOWS!

AND SPARM AT THAT!

BY

WILLIAM JOHN HOPKINS

WITH ILLUSTRATIONS FROM PAINTINGS BY

CLIFFORD W. ASHLEY

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PUBLISHERS' NOTE

It has seemed to the publishers that both the critical reception and the steady popularity of William J. Hopkins's 'She Blows! and Sparm at That!' not only justify but demand its inclusion in the Riverside Bookshelf. For this purpose it has been revised and materially shortened by the author, entirely reset in a new and larger font of type, and the illustrations by Clifford W. Ashley reproduced in full color. In this format, it is hoped, it will be more attractive to younger readers and its position as one of the great whaling classics more definitely assured.

ILLUSTRATIONS

Harpooning Porpoise	*Frontispiece*
Cutting-In	74
Bailing Case	88
Lancing a Whale	186

SHE BLOWS!

CHAPTER I

I AM nearing the evening of life. Many people think of me, I know, as a man who has attained to as much as one can reasonably hope for in this life — if they think of me at all. It is not so much, after all. The things I have aimed for and missed seem, at times, much more important than those I have had. But I put this thought by. Youth expects a good deal; and when one is young — and for a long time after; indeed, until a man is old — he finds hope at the bottom of the cup, enough of it to drown the taste of the bitter draught he has taken. I have evolved the theory that a man is old only when, the cup drained, there is no hope left in it. Thank God, I have not yet reached that point.

But I am inclined to reminiscence, and it scares me somewhat, for proneness to reminiscence is a symptom of age. I know that well, and garrulity is its sister. I am going to give my inclination to reminiscence play in writing of an experience of my youth. It may help to prevent me from boring my friends, and if you find this narrative becoming tedious, nothing is easier than to put the book down.

I was born in New Bedford, on Mill Street, in 1857. My father was Timothy Taycox, a ship carpenter, and a good one; a great whacking man, with a pleasant face and the neck of a bull. My mother was — well, she was

my mother. I remember her always as kind and loving, and, indeed, so was my father; but my mother — well, I cannot seem to get beyond that — she was my mother. I must have tried her greatly and often, but she never failed me, and I worshipped her, so far as it is in a boy who is healthy and strong and a roamer by nature. I had two brothers, one older and one younger than myself.

My first school was on North Street. My recollections of that school are vivid, and interesting — to me; but I suppose the school was not unlike other schools of its size and character. It was a small school, with about twenty-five scholars. The afternoon session was over at four o'clock, and then I set my face to the wharves, as the needle to the pole, except in the shortest days of winter. It was often warm for long periods during the winter. Two or three of us, kindred spirits, went together, sometimes running all the way, sometimes merely wandering, but always bringing up at about the same place. That was generally at the foot of Hamilton Street. Hamilton Street is a little street not much more than a hundred feet long, offset from the foot of William Street. It leads down very steeply from Water Street to a wharf, and its very name brings up before my mind a picture of a pair of heavy horses breasting the hill vigorously, dragging a low truck loaded with barrels of oil, and stirring up with their feet the powdery black dust of the street.

These low trucks were very generally used in New Bedford. The body was hung below the axles, and cleared the ground by perhaps eight inches. They had no sides, and the barrels of oil were rolled up on them

and stood on end, and with the continual shaking and rattling about they wore deep grooves into the flooring of the truck. It was a new truck which was not grooved in rings fore and aft of the great beam which served for an axle.

The basements of the buildings on that steep hill were shipping offices, or the offices of oil merchants, or the agents of ships. Indeed, you could hardly go into an office from Water Street to the water-front without seeing sea-chests stacked along the walls, with the name of some ship painted on the front of each chest. Not all of the offices of owners or agents of whalers were within this area, but they were not far from it. Wing's outfitting store, where I suppose all the business connected with their ships was done, was on Union Street, about a block above Water.

At that time and for some years after there was no railroad along the water-front, and nothing to impede the long line of trucks and small boys wending to and fro. About where the railroad is now there was usually a row of oil barrels on their sides, looking fresh and black and greasy. Gaugers were apt to be busy about them. And just beyond, on the throat of the wharf, were two structures like pens, enclosures fenced in with old ships' sheathing which showed plainly the nail holes, the white efflorescence and the greenish stain which proclaimed the fact that they had sailed thousands of miles of salt ocean with the copper next them. These pens were on either side of the entrance to the wharf, and between them was a lane, deep in powdery black dust, and just about wide enough for a truck. Over the tops of the fences of sheathing could be seen seaweed

bleached white with age, and flourishing green land weeds, nodding and waving in the wind. Under the seaweed, I was told, were barrels of oil which their owner had packed away there some years before. He was waiting for a rise in price. The barrels may be there yet, but if they are they must be nearly empty. The oil will have leaked out.

It was a rare occasion when any one of the wharves — at any rate the three or four wharves from Union Street north — had no ships lying beside it. There were usually two or three beside each wharf, and sometimes more; discharging or fitting or being repaired. My father was always at work upon some ship, on a staging in the dock alongside. I never tired of watching him at work, and would sit for hours on the stringpiece just above him or on the wharf opposite, while he removed from the side or the bottom of the vessel 'hove-down' ribs which had begun to rot, and put others in their places; or renewed the planking on the bottom.

'Heaving down' for repairs was a common occurrence. A tackle was fastened to the mast and to a special heaving-pile on the wharf. There were several of these heaving-piles on each wharf, each firmly anchored by great masses of rock. I have seen scores of ships hauled down. The sails were always unbent — stripped — from the yards almost the first thing after a ship came in, but the yards were often in place on a vessel when she was hove down. They were braced well around, of course, or she could not have been hove over very far before her main yard would touch the wharf. Then they heaved on the tackle, and the vessel was heaved over upon her bilge, exposing the bottom on one side.

I have often seen a vessel's keel entirely exposed in this way. The exposed side of the bottom was as easily got at in this position as if she had been in dry dock; perhaps rather more easily. The carpenters worked from float stages alongside, and the ship was let up little by little as they worked up from the keel. First the copper was ripped off, then the sheathing, and then the planking, and then the ribs taken out, if any of them needed to be replaced. I have seen the bare bones of many a ship exposed in this way, and it would be possible to rebuild a ship completely, first one side and then the other, without taking her out of the water. I have no doubt that it has been done.

As long as I was pretty small I was fairly well contented to sit on the stringpiece, with the sun on my back, and watch my father; or to sit on one of the low, smooth, round-butted mooring-piles — always called 'spiles' in New Bedford — and gaze out over the harbor. It was a beautiful harbor. It is a beautiful harbor now; but there seems to me to be something lacking, and less of that atmosphere of peace and serenity which I loved. Although there are still a few of the old square-riggers left there are many days and weeks together when not one of them is at the wharves, and I have not seen a vessel hove down in many years. It is no longer to be expected that, as one turns into Hamilton Street, there will appear the once familiar tracery of masts and yards hanging like a net before his eyes; not a forest of masts, perhaps, but enough of them to warm his heart. Some of the yards had sails hanging from them and flapping gently in the breeze, and on some the sails were neatly furled, but most of them were bare. A jobbing wagon

would be driven upon the wharf in a whirl of the black dust, and would discharge its load of sailors, many of them natives of one of the Western Islands, or of Brava, some very black, as I recall them, with great hoops of thin gold in their ears; and their dunnage, some of it in sea-chests, but much done up in shapeless bundles in a gay colored cloth or in a sheet.

These men and the white sailors who came with them were bound for the vessel with sails on her yards, for she was about ready to set out on a voyage of two or three or four years. In those days voyages averaged between three and four years in length. There was always great confusion, as it seemed to me: piles of boxes and barrels and casks, a mate or two shouting orders, sweating men getting the things aboard, some lengths of chain cable, coils of new rope which creaked as they were handled, and innumerable odds and ends. I watched and wondered until, at last, the tug came alongside, lines were cast off, and the vessel was taken out into the stream to anchor there overnight. The crew were kept busy there, stowing things, but even then there was apt to be a great litter on the decks when she was finally taken in tow by the tug. The tug cast her off somewhere below Sow and Pigs — somewhere between Sow and Pigs and Block Island — and, with a farewell blast of her whistle, turned about and came home again. But I did not witness that ceremony until I was fifteen.

When the ship had hauled out into the stream I would sit on my favorite pile and gaze out at her and at the harbor. She usually anchored in the channel near Palmer's Island, almost in line with Fort Phœnix on the

Fairhaven side. I sat on my pile and gazed at her, looking trim and seaworthy — as she was in fact — and envied the black boys with the thin gold hoops in their ears, and dreamed dreams, as I suppose all boys do, even the most matter-of-fact of them.

It happened that the father of my best friend had a boat, a thirty-five-foot sloop. Naturally enough I was asked to go sailing in it whenever Jimmy went. Jimmy Appleby was the boy's name. The sloop was rather old-fashioned, even for those days, and our going out in her was not all play. John Appleby found us of some help even when we were only ten, and we learned quickly to help in hoisting sail, and to tend sheets, and to reef, and to steer, and to do the other little odd jobs in connection with sailing a boat. I have gone out on the footropes of the bowsprit many a time when I was not turned twelve, and it had come on to blow, and she was plunging into a head sea — she pitched fearfully, with her shallow body, and a head sea just about stopped her — and I have been trying to stow the jib — not to furl it, just to tie it down any way — and holding on for my life, and have been plunged to my neck in one sea after another as she dived into them. That sloop was the champion high diver. I do not think that that experience ever imbued me with the desire to learn to swim. I was concerned only with holding on and getting my job done as soon as possible.

I have no clear recollection of my usual standing at school, except that I have the impression that I was apt to be in hot water from one cause or another. I must have done reasonably well in my studies, for I graduated from the Grammar School before my fifteenth birthday,

but my active interests were not there. The memories that surge up and clamor to be let loose are those of the water-front, the wharves, the ships, the harbor, and the bay.

CHAPTER II

One morning toward the end of June in the year 1872 I was on the wharf at the foot of Hamilton Street, where I was most apt to be. My father and a gang of ship carpenters were busy at the bottom of a ship that was hove down there, and they were working on float stages along her side. I have forgotten the name of the ship. It was yet early, for in those days carpenters went to work at seven and stopped at six or thereabouts, and no man that I ever knew of the old class of artisans would leave his hammer in the air, but he would work a few minutes more, if that was necessary to finish what he was at, and they were a contented, happy lot — superior men, as a rule.

The merry sound of the mauls was not merry to my ears, for I was restless and discontented, I remember, although there was nothing that should have made me so. But I was just through school, and although my father and my mother had said nothing about my getting to work, and my father had done nothing about it — fathers were apt to do something about it in those days, getting their sons apprenticed to whatever trade seemed good to them, without much regard to the preference of the sons — although my father had done nothing about it, I say, I knew that I was expected to get to work with no more delay than was reasonable. Both my father and my mother were wise people, and they wanted me to have time and opportunity to look about me and decide for myself what I preferred to do,

for my decision would involve my whole life, very probably, and greatly affect my happiness. When I had decided, I knew that I could depend upon my father to help me to the best of his ability; and that would be considerable, for my father was a man of some influence in his way, and especially in his trade. He had already helped my older brother Tom, who had chosen my father's trade, a choice which greatly pleased my father at the time. Tom was at his ship carpentering then on one of the stages with the men, and he had served three years of his apprenticeship. My younger brother, Joshua, was already planning to go into the same trade, but my father was rather lukewarm about it. He did not say why, but I can guess now that he was beginning to see that it was a trade that was doomed to extinction.

On that morning in June, 1872, I was making my choice, although I was not aware of it, but knew only that I felt discontented and uneasy and rather wanted to fight somebody. If Jimmy Appleby had been there I should probably have fought him — we fought often, without rancor, and without a decision — and the whole course of my life would have been changed. But Jimmy's father had put him to work, and he was not there, and there was nothing for me to do but to wander about the wharf, watching the men swinging their mauls; and I could not see much of that, except at the bow and the stern, for the vessel was hove down over the wharf, and her hull hid them. From the other side of the dock I should have had a fine view, but I saw it so often that I did not care much for it, and I suppose I did not think of it, being taken up with my restless state of mind, which impelled me to and fro.

A whaler was at one of the Fairhaven wharves, and a number of other boats were scattered along the waterfront, most of them small. I was about to look farther down toward the ferry slip and railroad station, but there lay a whaler in the stream, all ready to start; probably waiting for some of her crew, or for her captain to get his papers at the Custom House. I knew the vessel. It was the Clearchus. She had been fitting for some time, at the wharf next above the one I was on, and I had watched the caulkers, the carpenters and the riggers busy at her, each in their turn. The desire must have been conceived and born and got well grown without my being aware of it until that minute, but I knew it then. I looked at her lying there on the water that was ruffled under a southwest breeze, some great pennant flying at her masthead — I suppose it had her name on it, or the name of her owners, for I know it was white with a blue border and some blue letters in the centre — and there was not wind enough to keep it out straight enough for me to read the letters, but it would roll up and fall nearly straight down, and then unroll lazily and whip out to its length for just an instant, and drop and roll up again before I could make out a single one. She must have been waiting for her crew, for I saw only two men aboard of her, and they were doing nothing, but leaned upon the rail, which was at the height of their shoulders.

The Vineyard boat went curving out in a wide sweep, another came in; a tugboat pursued its leisurely way across the harbor, and I held my breath in fear lest it should be bound for the Clearchus — with her crew of two; a lightship began to warp into the next dock above,

preparatory to heaving down for repairs; the Custom House boat started out with an inspector to meet a ship that had been sighted down the bay; two catboats started from Al Soule's for the same purpose; riggers and stevedores were busy on a whaleship in the dock next below, getting her spars up and bending on sails; the leisurely activities of New Bedford Harbor of nearly fifty years ago went on; the sun was warm and the wind light, and the smell of tar and sperm oil was heavy on the air, but in the lee of the hill the oil smell overpowered everything else. I liked that sickish smell of crude sperm oil. I like it yet. With that smell in my nostrils I have but to close my eyes and I see the warm, sunny harbor, some whaler lying in the stream ready to sail, the fluorescent green of the water in the dock — its peculiar color due to a mixture of oil and sewage — some other whaler lying at the wharf with her sails hanging limp from her yards, perhaps a vessel hove down at the other side of the wharf, and I heard the sound of mallets and the laughter and the talk of men on the still air.

Fifty years ago I was actually hearing these things, waiting impatiently for twelve o'clock. But I waited, for I wanted to speak to my father alone. At last I heard the bell in the Stone Church tower sound noon, but the sound of the mauls did not stop at once, but one after another; then a few strokes of a single beetle, and I heard it laid down. The men had already begun to come up. My father was the last, and I watched him with some pride, a big, brawny, smiling man. I wished I were big and brawny and smiling, like him. And he saw me standing there, and smiled more than ever, a personal smile and tender in a way.

He put his hand on my shoulder. 'Well, Timmie,' he said. 'You here yet? I thought you would have gone home long ago. Dinner'll be waiting. What is it, boy? Walk along with me and tell me. I can see it's something bothering you.'

My brother Tom had started walking with us, but we were too slow for him, and he had run ahead. It was Big Tim and Little Tim. My father was always known as Big Tim.

I did not know how to begin, so I said nothing, but I struggled.

My father saw the struggle. He smiled again. 'Out with it, Timmie,' he said.

I raised my eyes slowly, and I am afraid that tears were in them.

'I want to go whaling, father,' I blurted out.

His smile faded swiftly. 'Do you?' he said. 'Do you? I hoped it wouldn't be that. It begins to look — or it has been looking for some time as if the whaling business would die out. It won't be a good business for some time, if it doesn't go from bad to worse. Have you thought of that, Timmie?'

I shook my head. 'I want to go whaling,' I said again.

He laughed, and then he sighed. 'It's a bad business for your mother and me,' he said, 'to have our boy starting out on a voyage at fifteen for three or four years. But if you will you will, and I'd better see about getting you a berth.' He turned and looked at the ship in the dock below. 'There's a vessel the riggers should be through with soon. She should sail in a couple o' weeks or thereabouts. I might get you in there. What do you say, Timmie?'

'Where is she going, father?'

'Well,' he answered slowly, 'it's always hard to tell where a whaler's going. Wherever whales promise. But we braced and strengthened her for Ar'tic work. She's a good vessel now, Timmie, and thoroughly braced. I think likely she'll round the Horn, and make the Ar'tic next season. If she has luck in the South Seas she may hang over there another winter, and not try the Ar'tic until the next year. But the Ar'tic's where she's going sooner or later.'

'I don't want to go to the Ar'tic, father. Where's the Clearchus going?'

My father looked around in surprise.

'The Clearchus!' he exclaimed. 'Why she's in the stream. Her crew'll be aboard in an hour or two. Cap'n Nelson expects to sail to-day.'

'But where's she *going?*'

'Going sperm whaling, Hatteras, South Atlantic, Indian Ocean, probably, and South Seas. I don't know, and I don't suppose Cap'n Nelson knows. She isn't going to the Ar'tic, that's sure.'

'If her crew isn't aboard pretty soon,' I objected, 'she can't sail to-day.'

'Well, no,' my father said, 'probably won't. Could of course, if he wanted to, but 'tisn't likely. Might go below and anchor, but what are you up to, Timmie? Going on the Clearchus?' And my father smiled as he asked the question, as though it were absurd.

'I'd like to, father,' I said. 'I want to go on a ship that's going sperm whaling in the warm oceans; to the South Seas. I — I've always wanted to see the South Seas.'

My father smiled again. '"Always" is a long word, Timmie. How long does it stand for? And as for seeing an ocean — why, one ocean's much like another — except the Ar'tic. You might think you were out on the bay with Jimmie. And a couple of hours' notice isn't much for your mother and me, is it, now? — going off for three or four years?'

'No-o, I suppose not. But I didn't know what I wanted until I saw the Clearchus out there. I know now. And I'll come back, father. Of course I hate to leave you and mother —'

My father laughed at that.

'Yes,' he said, 'you seem to. But never mind, Timmie, I know how you feel. Perhaps it's just as well. We shan't have the month of dreading it, and it'll be over before we know it. I'll do the best I can for you, but I can't promise. Nelson may be having trouble of some kind. I'll just drop in at the Custom House on the chance of finding him there, and if he isn't we'll run over to Wing's to see what they can tell us. But you mustn't fret if it can't be done.'

I almost danced with joy, and I promised not to fret. I knew that I should not fret at a thing that could not be done. I have never done that. I do the most and the best that I can, and am quite cheerful over the outcome. I was always the same; and what better can a man do than his best, and accept the result with a cheerful heart? But if we had made no attempt to find the captain I should have fretted at having left something undone and possibly lost a chance that I might have had.

We had been walking slowly up William Street as we

talked, and it was abreast of Eggers's little gunshop — where I had been used to go for my supply of fishlines and hooks — that my father virtually gave his consent and told me not to fret. The steep, short slope of Johnnycake Hill was just at our left — the Bourne Whaling Museum is now at the top of it — and the Custom House was but a few steps away, on the upper corner of the next street. I broke away and ran, looking back at my father with an ecstatic smile.

My father laughed again. 'Hold on, Timmie,' he called. 'Where 'you going?'

'Custom House,' I called back. 'Cap'n Nelson might get away.'

So I ran, leaving my father laughing, and I waited impatiently for a few seconds beside one of the huge Doric columns supporting the roof of the portico of that ancient pile of granite. It always seemed to me as old as the Pyramids. The Post-office then occupied the first floor, but there was nobody passing either in or out at that time, and my father joined me beside the Doric column. I remember that the broad stone steps seemed not a whit too solid and strong for his massive frame as he came up.

He said nothing, but chuckled as he and I entered together that empty, echoing room, and made for the stairs. It was — and is yet, I suppose — a curved staircase of stone, and never failed to excite my wonder that it stood and performed its function, for the granite steps were without visible means of support at their outer ends. I always mounted it with trepidation, half expecting that it would give way beneath me and precipitate me into the echoing abyss below. The stone steps

were somewhat worn by the feet of many captains, and my own feet had contributed.

We entered, and saw a long mahogany counter surmounted by a glass fence, behind which a man was writing, standing at the counter. He had a long, pointed beard, sprinkled with gray. He seemed to be alone in that spacious room. He was the Deputy Collector.

We started along beside the counter, which seemed endless, and my father was just opening the gate when suddenly we heard the sound of voices, as if a door had been opened. The voices stopped, and a man stumped toward us vigorously. I should say now that he was a youngish man, but then I thought him very old. He was about forty, with a close-clipped brown beard growing nearly up to his eyes, which were gray and piercing, looking out from between half-closed lids. Those eyes gave the impression of being at a great distance, and there was a spark of light in them so that they always made me think of a lighthouse with its cone of light. Even now I never see a lighthouse at a distance of three or four miles that I do not think of Captain Nelson's eyes.

'Hello, Tim,' he said, with no apparent intention of stopping.

But my father blocked the gateway. He was a good head taller than Captain Nelson.

'I'd like to have a word with you, Cap'n, if you have time. I won't keep you long. Don't you want a boy?'

'A boy? One of your boys? This the one?' He took me by the arm and made me face him. I was smiling nervously. 'You want to go whaling?'

'Yes, sir,' I said as steadily as I could. 'That is, I want to go if you're going to the South Seas.'

Captain Nelson laughed. 'No Ar'tic in yours, eh? What you want to go to the South Seas for? We don't lie 'round under palm trees and eat breadfruit and watch the surf breaking on coral sands, like the pictures in your geography books. What 'you been getting hold of?'

I squirmed and got very red, and stammered and said nothing.

Captain Nelson laughed again, and gave me a little shake and let me go.

'Well, Tim, no need to ask about any of your boys. You recommend him, I suppose?'

'I do, Cap'n. I'm sorry he's taken with whaling, and that's the truth; and it's rather sudden, for he's only told me within the last half-hour, and his mother and I will hate to have him go off for three or four years. But if that's what he wants I'd better help than try to hinder him.'

Captain Nelson nodded. 'May be five years, Tim. No knowing.' He turned suddenly to me. 'What's your name?'

'Tim, sir.'

'Well, little Tim, I guess we can find room for you. May not get the crew in time to sail to-night. Probably won't. But you'd better be on hand and keep an eye out for us. Bright and early in the morning, anyway.'

He nodded again, got his clearance papers, and stumped out. I stared stupidly after him.

My father sighed. 'Well, Timmie, that was soon done. We'll be late for dinner. Come along.'

And I said nothing, but pegged along beside him down the echoing stone stairs, my elation rapidly oozing out at my finger-tips. I was beginning to think of the

other side of it — his side and my mother's — and to be more than half sorry for my haste; but what is done is done. Boys — and girls too — are thoughtlessly cruel, fortunately for them and the world.

I could not eat much dinner, but went off to my room to pack a few things. It was not a large bundle that I tied up. My father must have told my mother as soon as I had gone, for she came up to my room as I was tying up my bundle. She had been crying, and tears were yet in her eyes, but she smiled divinely as she stood in my doorway.

'Well, Timmie, darling,' she said gently, 'so you're going to leave us. Four years is a long, long time to look forward to without you. I had hope that you would choose something else. But if you had to choose this it's better to have it soon over, and not to have a month of dreading it. And I'll say nothing but God bless you and God keep you, my precious!' She sat on the bed. 'Come here, darling boy, and let me have one hug and a kiss to remember.'

So I went, and I threw my arms around her neck, and I hid my face. We stayed so for a long time, she rocking back and forth, hugging me hard, and whispering to me.

CHAPTER III

The Clearchus did not get off that day, and at six o'clock my father and I walked home together, my heart like lead. The evening passed somehow. We all went up to bed at nine, as we always did, while the bell on the Stone Church was ringing the curfew; but we might as well have stayed up for two or three hours longer, for I could not sleep, and I am sure that my mother could not. It had begun to rain, a dreary drizzle, before I finally fell asleep.

I was awakened to find my mother standing in my doorway. She was smiling, but she looked as if she had not slept well. It was already after six. I jumped up, slid into my clothes hastily, and joined the family at breakfast, but I could scarcely eat. I was glad when my father pushed back his plate and got up. I said good-bye simply enough to my brothers, and they said good-bye to me, but they did not get up. They did not even stop eating. My mother came to the door with us. Tears stood in her eyes, but she smiled as she gave me a long, close hug. I returned her hug and her kiss, but I was very near to tears and I could not speak, so I bolted out at the door into the rain after my father, and I waved my hand to her. That was another picture that I carried locked in my breast of my mother standing at the open door, in the dreary drizzle, looking after me and smiling. Mothers have a good deal to bear. I wonder that they stand it.

We did not get off until after ten o'clock. I was the

first to see it — I mean the job wagon with its load of men and bundles. It was being driven on to the next wharf below — Central Wharf it was, although I did not know the wharves infallibly by name then. I called to my father, took up my bundle, and walked, rather slowly, I am afraid, around the head of the dock. The afternoon before I should have run. My father caught up with me at the head of the wharf.

The wagon was unloading about halfway down the wharf when we got there, and the men were taking out their bundles. Those bundles were of all sizes and all colors, but all were shapeless, a few in neat canvas bags, several in pillow-cases, and the others in gay flame-colored cloths, red and orange and a peculiar blue, but the predominating color was some shade of magenta. It is curious how fond those Western Islanders are of magenta. The men were grouping themselves, squatting on their bundles in the drizzle, or sitting on the rounded tops of the mooring-piles or on the stringpiece, or standing. I noticed only three of them: a great, gaunt, very black man, with thin hoops of gold in his ears, who stood impassively, his arms folded across his breast, and gazed at nothing and did not speak; a smaller man, also intensely black and with similar gold hoops in his ears, who sat atop of a pile and smiled and poured a steady stream of talk that I could not understand up to the first, and the gaunt man smiled now and then, showing a set of teeth that were sharp and of a dazzling whiteness; and a very old man, who I suppose was originally a white man, with fingers permanently bent, like talons, and very wrinkled face that looked like leather in texture and in color. He was sitting on the stringpiece, his

neat canvas bag between his knees, and looking up at the two black men; and occasionally there would flit over his face a humorous smile, leaving the look of humor there. On the whole it was a quiet crowd, and merry enough, considering the weather. A man, who I found afterwards was the second mate, moved slowly around among the groups and finally stood still, holding converse with none and gazing out over the harbor.

The old man cast his humorous eye up at my father.

'Lovely morning,' he said.

My father laughed. 'If you take it so,' he said, 'it's better. After all, what does the weather matter to an old sailorman like you?'

'Not a bit. I never let it make any difference to me. But the talk of these lads,' he said, waving a weather-beaten hand, with its talon-fingers, at the two black men, 'always makes me want to laugh. It sounds like monkey talk.'

'Don't you understand it?'

He shook his head. 'Not me. I never learned Portagee. I should die laughin' if I tried. They had none in the navy in my day.'

My father was interested. 'Have you been in the navy? I should have said merchant vessels, but I didn't think of the navy.'

The old man nodded. 'Oh, aye,' he said. 'It was the navy until the war was over, and I was too old for that, and then the merchant service for a couple o' years, and then whalin'. Whalin's easier. They don't drive a vessel so. You weren't goin' on this ship?'

My father smiled, and laid his great arm across my shoulders.

'No, I'm not going, but —'

'The boy?' the old man interrupted. 'Is he so? Well, can I be sort of lookin' after him? I'd take him under my wing with pleasure, perhaps teach him a thing or two, and try to keep him out o' trouble.'

My father was pleased, and accepted the old sailor's offer; and he told him of his own experience in the navy, and they swapped yarns for half an hour. The old man had been a boatswain in the navy. He was only fifty-eight, he said. I don't wonder he put it that way. The second mate had moved, and I looked up and saw the Helen Augusta, our largest tugboat, just about to make a landing at the end of the wharf.

I seized my father's arm in a panic.

He smiled. There was something infinitely protective in my father's smile.

'I'm going down with you, Timmie, and come back in the tug. It's too wet to work, luckily, so it won't make any difference to me, and I guess Cap'n Nelson'll let me go. Unless,' he added, looking at me suddenly, 'you'd rather not have me. Perhaps you'd rather say good-bye here. If you would I'd understand it.'

I shook my head, and clung fast to his arm. I could not have spoken to save my life. The old sailor, my new friend, was rolling along beside us, his canvas bag over his shoulder and sticking out a foot or two fore and aft. He glanced at me and smiled, and we all trooped aboard the tug on to her upper deck, and the men filed down the ladder to a place where it was dry and warm.

We were about to follow them when we were hailed from the pilot house. We obeyed the beckoning finger,

and in the pilot house we found Captain Nelson and the captain of the tugboat, a silent, sour-faced man whose name I cannot now remember, although it was then very familiar to me. Another man was leaning on the window-sill, his head outside, and one hand grasping a spoke of the wheel. He shouted some orders, pulled the bell, and we backed for a minute against a stern hawser. Then he pulled the bell once, and the chug of the engine stopped; before the water had stopped its swirling past the side he pulled the bell again, the engine chugged once more, and the bows turned faster toward the harbor. I was looking out at the wharves through a glass covered with little fine drops of mist, and I saw one of the men on the wharf lift the bight of heavy line over the top of the mooring-pile and drop it into the water as we began to go ahead. The man at the wheel pulled the jingle bell, and the engine chugged faster, and I could hear little familiar noises from the engine, as though it had settled down for a day's work.

I was still looking out through the misty glass at the rapidly receding wharves, with the vessel that the riggers were not through with, the other that my father was working on hauled down, the stagings floating in the dock beside her; the lightship in the process of being hove down; the pens of sheathing and the rows of oil barrels; the tops of the wharves themselves, every foot of which I knew intimately. I wondered when I should next set foot on those familiar wharves; the picture blurred a little, and it was not the rain. But I was not quite fifteen, and I was going away on a voyage of four or five years. At fifteen, four or five years might as well be four or five æons. Our turning had cut off my view of

the wharves, and we had straightened out for the Clearchus, and the rain was coming dead ahead.

We were drawing alongside the Clearchus, and we made fast and the crew went over the side stolidly, although some of them seemed merry enough, and my old sailor took the whole thing as a joke. Then Captain Nelson went, and my father and I. By the time I had got on the deck of the ship the captain had gone aft and was talking with the mate.

I had never happened to be on the Clearchus before, and neither had I been on any whaler just starting on a voyage. Her deck was well cluttered with all sorts of stuff, which there had been no time to stow below, and no men to do it. Some of it was covered roughly with tarpaulins to keep it from the wet, and it was shoved into corners or littered the alleyways between the great brick try-works and the bulwarks. The deck itself — where it showed at all — was covered with a film of moisture, and seemed to have sweated just oil enough to make it very slippery.

The deck of an old whaler is full of odd structures. On almost all old whaleships there were two small deckhouses aft, one on either side, with the wheel and the cabin skylight between them; and on many ships this space was roofed over, giving the steersman protection in bad weather. This was the case on the Clearchus; and there was another structure just forward of this after house. This 'gallows,' as it is called, was no more than a roof covering the booby-hatch — which led to the steerage; where the boatsteerers slept — supported on posts at the corners, the posts inclined sharply inward at the angle of the standing rigging. On the top of this

roof were three spare whale-boats, bottom up. There was a third structure — merely a roof — just aft of the foremast, over the try-works. The galley was in the starboard side of the after house, which may strike some as a very queer place for it, but it was always so on a whaler. It was necessarily very small, taking up less than half of that side. The cabin stairs, or companion, were in the port side of the after house.

We took refuge under the gallows over the booby-hatch, from which point we had as clear a view of the deck as it was possible to have anywhere except from the scuppers. The deck was anything but clear, and the man at the wheel saw the great butts of the masts, the try-works, and other things of a more temporary nature, but little of the deck, and of the sea before the ship and of the sky above nothing at all. There was no need for him to see either. He had an unobstructed view of the compass.

The tug took us about twenty-five miles, but it seemed an unbearably short journey on that dull, rainy morning. The silence was broken only by the soft noise of the sea, and of the ship going through it, and by the creak and groan of the hawser on the bitts and of the yards in the slings as she rose and fell gently; and by the sound of the water dripping from the yards and rigging upon the deck, and now and then a voice. Altogether it was a silent, gray, dismal journey. Coils of rope hung from the belaying pins near me, and they swung regularly with the motion of the ship. I wished that they would stop. They did not, of course, except for a moment, regularly; then they began again.

The time was coming soon when the tug would cast off, and my father must go back. We got beyond Devil's

Bridge, with the Vineyard looming indistinctly, but scarcely visible, on our weather beam. The tug whistled, and Captain Nelson came to us.

'Well, Tim,' he said, 'I guess you'll have to get ready. It's too rough for the tug to come alongside, but I'll send you over in a boat. She's dropping us now.'

My father said he was sorry to be so much trouble; and Captain Nelson said it was no matter, that it would be good practice for the crew. Then he looked at me, and put his hand on my shoulder.

'Timmie,' he said gently, 'you haven't signed yet, and if you want to go back with your father I'll send you.'

I shook my head furiously. 'No, thank you, sir,' I said. 'I'll sail with you — if you want me — if you'll take me.'

How could I back out then? I should have been a laughing-stock for years, and I should never have a better chance. But I did want to go back with my father.

Captain Nelson smiled. 'I'll take you, and you'll get over your homesickness when we get a sight of the sun. It's a dismal day to start off.'

They cast off the hawser, and backed the main topsail, and the vessel lay there with the seas beating upon her while the tug came up abeam, and lay rolling. And they came and cast loose the very boat we were standing under, and the men tailed on to the falls, and the boat was lowered until it was level with the rail; and two of the crew tumbled in to look after the falls, and my father gave me one hug, and I clung to him for a moment.

'Good-bye, Timmie,' he whispered. 'I'll give your

love to your mother. Be a good boy, and do a little more than is expected of you. Be ready to do a man's work when you are able, and let us be proud of you when you come home.'

The men began to slack away on the falls. I watched the men slide down the falls as the boat touched the water, my father among them; and the falls were unhooked quickly, two men holding her off from the side of the ship. Then they shoved off, the five long oars took the water, and they rowed to the tug, the whaleboat rising to the seas as lightly as a cork. And they drew alongside the tug, but did not stop, and my father stepped out upon the broad rail of the tug and down upon her deck, and turned to wave to me.

As the boat came back the tug started, with long blasts of her whistle as a message of farewell to us. My father still stood in the gangway, close to her house, and waved to me. I watched her as long as I could see her, a mite — a speck tossing on the heaving sea.

CHAPTER IV

By the next morning the skies had cleared, and there was bright sun, with a light breeze from the southwest. It had begun to clear soon after midnight, and the stars had come out one by one, with drifts of ragged scud flying over. I had not seen it, but I was sleeping soundly, after some miserable hours, for I was a very homesick boy. Mother and father — even brothers — and home never seemed so dear or so far away, and I seemed to be cut off from them completely. I had no pangs of seasickness, either then or later, for which I suppose I should be thankful; but I did not give that matter a single thought, as far as I can remember. I suppose my mind was too thoroughly taken up with its own wretchedness to worry about a possible wretchedness of body. And a full realization of my wretched and miserable state came upon me the instant I was fully awake, with a distinct stab at my heart. A few tears trickled from my eyes, and my heart was like lead until I stepped out upon deck and saw the sun and a quiet sea, misty about the horizon, and the bark making her way through it under easy sail, rolling a very little, lazily, and the men, barefooted, scrubbing the decks as clean as might be of their coating of oil with the water standing upon it in little separate drops, like dew. I know the deck had a queer, greasy, frosty look, and fairly large drops had gathered and stood up, little smooth hills, about two or three inches apart. The water from the hose and the men with their swabs made these hills disappear like magic,

together with the frosty look of the deck. Tarpaulins in irregular heaps still covered piles of stuff here and there on the deck, which the men avoided as well as they could.

One of the men swabbing the deck was my old friend the old navy man, whose name I found was Peter Bottom. The two very black men with gold hoops in their ears were there too, the tall one as silent and dignified as ever, but working well, and the shorter one gay and garrulous, but seldom evoking from the other as much as a smile. What these men's real names were I never knew, and it does not matter what they were. The tall one always went by the name of Tony, and the shorter one by the name of Man'el.

Peter Bottom looked up at me, and smiled and winked, and worked nearer with his swab. There was a quarterdeck on the old Clearchus, and a break in the deck with one low step up to the part covered by the after house. I was standing on that step and leaning against the house, for I did not want to get into the water that was flowing so freely. When Peter had worked near enough, he told me in low tones that if I would hunt him up later he would impart some information that might be useful and the beginning of my education.

The men were busy nearly all day getting the decks reasonably clear, and the stuff stowed below, and it was not until late in the afternoon that I found Peter Bottom standing by the windlass, gazing out to the eastward. The wind was light, as it had been all day, and it looked very quiet and peaceful out there, with a grayish haze all along the horizon. The water toward the west,

on the weather side, was too bright to look at with comfort. There was still a very slight heave of the sea left from the night before. Many of the crew were standing about, or sitting on the forecastle, but they were not saying much.

Peter looked up as I approached. He had a sort of permanent smile on his face, a pleasant, humorous expression of perpetual amusement. This deepened to a personal smile when he saw me.

'Here you are, my lad,' he said. 'I was just thinking about you, and that I'd have to go after you if I could contrive a way. Now to begin at the beginning, what might your name be?'

'Tim,' I answered; 'Tim Taycox.'

'A good name,' he said. 'I had a shipmate named Tim once, but he did no credit to the name. My name's Peter Bottom.' That was how I found out his name, although I have used it already. 'A queer name, Bottom, but it's none of my responsibility, my name. You'll call me Peter, and so we'll get rid of it. Now, tell me what you know about whaling, so I'll know where to begin. There's no sense in telling you what you know a'ready. And then you might tell what you know of ships and of sailing, for I s'pose you've knocked about some in small boats, living in New Bedford.'

Now, what I really knew about whaling was nothing at all, although I had always heard it talked about, and had absorbed as much in that way as a boy can who has seen nothing but the shore end of it. So I told Peter just that, and I told him of my experiences in boats.

'What's your lay?' asked Peter Bottom suddenly.

'My lay?' I stammered. 'I — I don't know.'

'Don't you know what I mean?' he pursued. 'Every man on board has a part o' the voyage — the catch — instead o' wages.'

I am afraid I interrupted him rather indignantly. Of course I knew that, but I had not the least idea what the share of each man was. He enlightened me. First he told me that the share of the boy was one two-hundredth. That would give me, if our take of whales amounted to fifty thousand dollars, the princely sum of two hundred and fifty dollars, for four years' work. That did not seem very much, but Peter comforted me by saying that Captain Nelson was a good master, and had the reputation of making good voyages, and it was likely that I would get more than that. He told me that the owners took two thirds of the take for their share, and furnished the vessel and fitted her, and fed the crew throughout the voyage, and made whatever advances were necessary. If the ship made a 'broken voyage,' as an unprofitable voyage was called, it might easily result in considerable loss to the owners, while the crew at least could not lose on it. Such unprofitable voyages were few, however. It was everything to get a lucky master. Captain Nelson had the reputation of being a very lucky master, and the Clearchus had always been a fairly lucky ship. Peter had satisfied himself on those points before signing, and he supposed that all the best men of the crew had been equally particular. It was easy to get a good crew for a ship and a captain known to be lucky, and often very hard to get any kind of a crew for a captain without that reputation.

He told me further that Captain Nelson's lay was one tenth, which is the largest that was given to a captain;

the mate's one twentieth, for our mate, Jehoram Baker, was also a good man. A first mate's lay ranges from one eighteenth to one twenty-fifth. Our second mate, Alonzo Wallet, was 'nothin' to brag on,' as Peter whispered, but he got the regular second mate's lay of one thirty-fourth. The third mate, John Brown, had a lay of one forty-fifth; the fourth and fifth mates got a little less than that; and the five boatsteerers got from one one-hundred-and-eighteenth to one one-hundred-and-fiftieth. Five mates may seem an excessive number. I know it seemed so to me, but the Clearchus was a five-boat ship, and needed five boatheaders. How Peter found out the amount of the captain's and the mates' lays I never knew; possibly it was only gossip. Then he gave me the lays of the rest of the crew.

The cooper got one sixty-third; the steward one ninetieth; the cook one one-hundred-and-twentieth and half the slush; what the slush was I did not know at the time, although anybody of any intelligence ought to have been able to guess that it was the refuse from the galley. I became familiar enough with slush before I got home again, and a bucket of slush will come nearer to turning my stomach than anything else. It consists chiefly of grease, often turned rancid. Many a bucket of it have I carried to the masthead, and have applied it generously and rapidly to the mast all the way down, for I was always anxious to get that job done and to get rid of my slush bucket as soon as possible.

Our crew consisted of twenty-five seamen, including the boatsteerers, ranging in ability from Peter down to the green hands, of whom there were eight at starting on that voyage; the captain and five mates; and the

cooper, the sailmaker, who could act on a pinch as cooper and as carpenter, the steward, the cook, and the boy, who was myself; thirty-six all told, enough to man the five boats and to leave six on the ship to work her if necessary. The boatsteerers are included among the seamen, but their standing on the ship was more that of petty officers.

All this time the ship was slowly forging ahead in the light air, and rising and falling lazily, and the light of the late afternoon sun was making the water to windward of a dazzling brightness, while I looked off to leeward over a quiet sea to the hazy horizon. There was not wind enough to keep the sails full, and now and then one fell against the mast and made a curious scraping sound until a puff of air drew it away again.

Peter was beginning on the sails of the ship. Now, what I knew about a square-rigged vessel was even less than I had known about the matter of lays, and I was feeling ashamed of my ignorance and rather hopeless. But as I looked off at the water, I saw, about two or three miles off, a little feathery puff of vapor rise, like the drooping white ostrich plume on Ann McKim's hat. The feathery shaft of vapor rose lazily, and the sun shone on it and glorified it for a brief moment, and it drifted off slowly and vanished. And I watched it stupidly, and just as I came to and grasped Peter Bottom's arm, there floated down to us from aloft a melodious cry.

'Bl-o-o-ows! Bl-o-o-ows!'

It was most deliberately given, and was a quavering, musical cry, running up and down the scale, much like a yodel. It was one of the black men who gave it.

These black men always gave the cry more melodiously than a white man. They had had a man aloft all the afternoon.

That cry was music to me, and all the men were interested, especially the green hands, to whom it was as strange as it was to me.

Mr. Baker was waving his arms and beckoning, and the crews of the first and second mate's boats were running, Peter Bottom among the best of them. The boats were still lashed at the davits, but it took only a few seconds to loose them and to begin to lower, two or three of the men in each boat beginning to overhaul the harpoons and lances and other gear. As soon as the boats struck the water, the falls were unhooked, and they pushed off from the side of the ship and lay there while the crew seemed to be busied with something on the thwarts, I could not see what, and the ship was slowly leaving them bobbing and drifting. I was just beginning to wonder about it when I saw that it was the mast and sail they were busy with. The second mate's boat stepped her mast and spread the sail, but in Mr. Baker's boat they abandoned that intention, and began rowing, while the ship kept off gradually on the same course as the boats.

By the time we had made our course Mr. Baker's boat was well ahead and going strong, the five long oars dipping slowly and with a fair regularity, but with some splashing from the green hands. It occurs to me to say something about a whaleboat for the benefit of those who do not know the boats, and they must be many, for the whaleboat, especially the boat fully equipped for chasing whales, has become a very unfamiliar sight.

The whaleboat is sharp at both ends, and is built as lightly as is consistent with great strength. Its length is thirty feet; beam, six feet; depth at extreme ends, a trifle over three feet (thirty-seven inches in the boats of the Clearchus); depth amidships, twenty-two inches. It rides the seas like a cork, and the sense of buoyancy is surprising to any one who is not used to the boat. It has a centreboard, and is equipped with mast and sail, which can be set up when wanted. For the purpose of stepping the mast quickly, it has a sort of hinge to the thwart on the after side, and as it is raised, the foot slides down to the step in a guide, or channel, until the mast is erect, when the butt drops into the step. It is held in its place by stays, permanently fast to the mast near its head, above the hoist of the sail, one on each side, which are then made fast through eyes on the gunwales.

When the boat is going under sail it is steered by a rudder. This rudder is always carried, when not in use, close under the gunwale at the stern, outside the boat, of course. It is held in place by two small lines permanently fast to it, one at the heel of the rudder, the other up nearer its head, the inboard ends of the lines passing through holes in the port gunwale to cleats on the little deck at the stern. The rudder is always hung before the boat is lowered, as it would be a difficult matter to hang it in a seaway, and might consume much precious time. When fast to a whale, the mate hauls in on the upper line, unshipping the rudder, and makes the line fast to the starboard cleat; then he hauls in on the lower line, raising the heel of the rudder to the gunwale, and makes fast to the port cleat. This operation can be performed

with a few turns of the hand, but many mates preferred the steering oar, which is twenty-two feet long, to the rudder, when at close quarters. A couple of sweeps with this great oar will usually lay the boat around, but with the rudder it is not easy. A whaleboat, because of its length and the comparative flatness of its keel, and the slight purchase of the rudder, will not come about easily under sail.

When going upon a whale, a boat always goes, if possible, under sail. This is not for the purpose of saving the men trouble, although you would think that a praiseworthy purpose. It is to avoid frightening the whale, which hears the sound of oars at considerable distance, the sound undoubtedly going through the water. When the sail cannot be used, oars are used, or paddles. The paddles are used only when it is necessary to go very quietly, and there is no wind. They are usually stout and heavy, about four feet long; and when not in use are stuck along the sides, near the thwarts, and out of the way.

Oars are the normal method of propulsion. There are five long oars, three to starboard and two to port. From bow to stern, they are called harpooner's (generally called 'harpoonier' on a whaler), bow, midship, tub, and after oar. The harpooner's and the after oar are fourteen feet long, and the midship oar eighteen feet. Those three are the starboard oars. The port oars, the bow and the tub, are sixteen feet each. Under the tub oar, by the way, seems to be the favorite place for a whale to strike a boat. By this inequality in length of the oars a pretty good balance is reached, whether the harpooner is rowing or not. Each of these long, heavy

oars is handled by one man, who sits far over on the thwart on the opposite end from the thole-pins or rowlocks. When thole-pins are used the oar works on a mat laid up of small line, placed between the pins, to muffle the sound; rowlocks are matted with marline or other small stuff.

The steering oar, as I have mentioned, is twenty-two feet long. It passes out astern over the gunwale on the port side of the stern-post, through a bight of rope covered with leather, which rests on a bracket. One end of the rope forming this bight is taken inboard through an eye, and belayed on a cleat on the deck at the stern. There is a projecting handle on the upper side of the steering oar, and the steersman stands up to his work. When the steering oar is not in use, it is drawn in clear of the water, and on the boats of the Clearchus, at any rate, the handle was held in an eye spliced into a rope, which was worked in above the gunwale on the port side. This just fitted the handle, and held the oar out of everybody's way and ready for instant use.

The boat is decked over for three feet at the bow, and four feet at the stern. The deck at the bow is sunk six inches below the gunwale, and is called the 'box.' Directly aft of the box is the cleat, or 'clumsy cleat.' This is a wide, heavy plank, on a level with the gunwale, in which — on the port side, unless made especially for a left-handed man — a roughly semicircular piece is cut out, into the place of which will fit a man's left thigh, or upper leg. The edges of this hole are thickly matted with yarn or other soft stuff. Into this opening the harpooner fits his left thigh to steady him when he is about to dart the harpoon, or the mate fits his when he

is about to use the lance. Various sheaths are on the forward edge of the cleat, for knives, and along its top runs a loose piece of heavy line, its ends knotted underneath at opposite ends of the cleat. This is the 'kicking-strap,' under which the whale line passes. There is a hatchet in a frame on the side of the boat below the cleat, where the mate can reach it easily, to cut the line; and a whaling-gun lies on a board under the cleat, at his right, fast to the boat by a line through its stock.

The deck at the stern is used for the cleats which I have mentioned, for the lines from the rudder and the steering oar, and under it is the cuddy or locker in which are carried the breaker of water and the lantern-keg and the compass and other small things with which a whaleboat is usually equipped. The lantern-keg contains biscuit — hardtack — candles, flint and steel, or matches, pipes and tobacco; all the necessaries of life. The main purpose of this after deck, however, is to provide a convenient place for the loggerhead.

The loggerhead is a miniature mooring-pile projecting from this deck on the starboard side, and continued downward through the cuddy into the keel. Its top is six inches in diameter, and it is eight inches high. The whale line passes around it on its way out, and one or more turns can be taken around it, so that the line can be snubbed as much as is wished, or can be held there. It is a frequent occurrence for the loggerhead to get so hot from the friction of the line that it smokes, and is only prevented from bursting into flame by throwing water upon the line by the bucketful or the hatful.

The whale line, without knots or splices, is kept in tubs, usually one for a length, sometimes two, near the

stern. The tub oar gets its name from this. It is most carefully coiled, so that it shall run out freely, without kinks. A second length of line, coiled in its tubs, is carried by each whaleboat, and can be bent on to the first in case of need.

From the tubs, then, the line passes around the loggerhead, where the boatsteerer handles it, and snubs it as much as he wishes. It may be running out so fast as to burn his hands; and a swiftly running line not only burns the hands, but can take the very flesh off the bones, as I know to my sorrow. To guard against this, handcloths or 'nippers' are provided, much like those worn by bricklayers, and often forgotten. The 'nipper' is a patch of canvas, eight inches square, to be held in the hand without fastening, as it might take a man overboard if fast to him. From the loggerhead the line passes forward along the length of the boat, in its middle line, lying, when slack, on the looms of the oars. As each man sits well over to one side of his thwart, the middle line of the boat is left clear for it. It then passes under the kicking strap, and through a groove — the 'chocks' — in the head of the stem, in which it is held by a small wooden peg or pin. This pin is purposely small and frail so that if there is any obstruction, such as a kink in the line, the pin will break instead of carrying the boat under. In the bottom of the chocks there is a small metal roller which does not always work.

The whale line, after passing out of the boat through the chocks, is taken in again, and a considerable length of it coiled up on the box — the little sunken deck at the bow. This is called the 'box line.' The first harpoon is attached to the free end of the box line, the second

iron to an extra piece of line, the 'short wrap,' fast to the box line a little way from its free end. These two harpoons rest with their points projecting over the bow and their sapling hardwood handles in the crotch. The crotch is a sort of double Y-shaped contraption, which is set into a socket in the starboard gunwale, and projects about sixteen inches above it.

The boatsteerer or harpooner rows the oar nearest the bow. When near enough to the whale, at the command, 'Stand up, Jack,' or 'Stand up, you!' from the mate or boatheader, he takes in and secures his oar, turns around, stands up, takes the first harpoon, which is immediately ready to his hand in the crotch, fits his leg firmly in the opening in the cleat, and makes ready to dart. At the further command from the boatheader, 'Give it to him!' he darts the harpoon with all the force left in him after rowing for miles, perhaps with all his strength. The harpoon is heavy, and both hands are used in throwing it, the right hand around the upper part of the wooden handle or haft, and giving it its forward impetus, and the left hand supporting the haft toward its lower end. Then, as quickly as he can, he grabs the second harpoon from its rest in the crotch, and darts that. This is in the hope of getting two irons fast, but the second harpoon must be thrown out of the boat in any case.

Lances and spare harpoons are stowed between the thwarts and the gunwale, the iron shanks held in a little brass frame — at least, on the boats of the Clearchus — with a sliding wire to lock them in, and the wooden hafts held in marline. Lances are to starboard, and harpoons to port; and on each, whether lance or harpoon, is a

wooden sheath covering the sharp edge. It is one of the duties of the bow oar to remove the sheath, and to get out the lance. He has certain other duties which are important, and which make the bow oar next in line of promotion to the harpooner or boatsteerer.

When fast to the whale, the boatsteerer makes his way aft, and takes the steering oar, changing places with the boatheader, who is usually one of the mates, while the mate takes his position in the bow, a lance in his hand, ready to lance the whale and finish the business.

A harpoon or a lance is a poor bedfellow in a seaway, for they are kept very sharp. In fact, they are often a source of danger even when out of the boat. The second harpoon has to be thrown out of the boat in any case, whether there is a chance of getting it into the whale or not, for it is fast to the whale line, and if it were not thrown out there would be trouble. This second iron, when not in the whale, where it belongs, goes jumping and skittering over the waves after the fleeing whale, ahead of the boat or even abreast of it when the boat is hauled up close, or afoul of it.

The placing of the loggerhead at the stern accomplishes three things: it gives the boatsteerer easy control of the line, which the mates, in the bow, would have no time to attend to when they were at close quarters; incidentally it avoids the possibility of pulling the boat to pieces by a towing whale in which the harpoon is fast; but the controlling reason for it is that the men can heave on the line without leaving their places, which they must be able to do to get the boat up to the whale, so that the mate can lance.

But to come back to the boats, which had been mak-

ing progress according to the natures of the men in charge of them. They were no nearer than they had been at first, and we drifted on, Mr. Wallet's boat just abeam of us. The farther we went, the farther we were behind the whales, which were wandering directly away from us. The sun was near setting, and after an hour of a losing chase, signals were made for the boats to come aboard again.

CHAPTER V

We reached the Gulf Stream some time during that night. I remember that I was awakened before dawn by the heeling of the ship so that I was all but pitched out of my bunk. I sat up and held on, and heard the rain, and the sound of feet on deck, and orders shouted, and the hoarse singsong of the crew as they manned the sheets and the halliards and the braces, and the noise of the yards swinging, and the sails slatting. There was no singsong from the men aloft taking in sail. The ship was pitching and rolling badly. The old Clearchus was good at that. Then Captain Nelson went on deck, and I dressed hastily, and went out too into the pitchy blackness of a stormy night at sea.

The two men at the wheel were having a hard time of it. I took my stand by the weather corner of the after house, hugging it close, to keep out of the rain, and looked out at the wet deck, which gleamed faintly now and then, and at the shadowy forms of the men who happened to pass near me, and at the white tops of the seas rolling past. The foam seemed to shine with a light of its own. Then the ship gave a more violent plunge than ever, and I could tell by the sound that she had shipped a sea over the bows, although I could see nothing; but as she rose I heard it come rushing aft, and the next moment the water was swirling in the near scupper, and slopped up against the leeward wall of the house. I stood there for some time, until long after they had sail reduced to reefed topsails, and my feelings were

a curious mixture of exultation in the wildness of the night and — I may as well confess it now, although nothing could have drawn such a confession from me then — a sneaking fear that the ship would not stand such buffeting. I thought of home, and knew very well that my mother was lying awake and listening to the wind and the rain, and thinking of me. And I knew that I was in my father's thoughts too, although those thoughts could not keep him awake. He knew that I was taking but the ordinary risks that every rightly constituted boy has to take, and goes to meet gladly. Indeed the risk was not great. It did not seem possible that I had left home less than two days before, and that it was such a few miles behind me. My thoughts being in that direction, I decided to keep a journal of some sort, and send it home when a chance offered. The chance may be a brief one, merely a passing ship, when there is no time to write letters.

The next day there was a stiff breeze from the southwest, which continued for several days. If the Clearchus had been at all fast, or even an average sailer, she would have made the Hatteras grounds in a couple of days; but that was a big 'if,' as my father would have said with his quiet smile. Captain Nelson, knowing her well, made no attempt to crowd her, but went on under easy sail, so that we were a long time in getting to Hatteras. We got there toward the latter part of an afternoon. Cape Hatteras, of course, was not in sight, nor even the lightship on Diamond Shoals; but there was one vessel in sight. I tried to make myself believe that I knew it for the Desdemona or the Palmetto, but Captain Nelson said that neither of those ships was there. However, he

announced his intention of going aboard of her, and said he would take me if I wanted to go.

The vessel had been cutting-in, as Captain Nelson could tell without his glass, and as Peter Bottom and every other old hand could tell. I could not see what they were doing, and I have no reason to think that any of the green hands could. She was more than three miles away, and there was a light bluish haze which made it difficult to see clearly, but I got a pair of battered field glasses from the rack, and managed to make out dimly the outline of some sort of a flimsy structure on her side, the crew all crowded up by the windlass, and something bulky being hoisted in over the gangway. Captain Nelson had given me the use of those old field glasses, as nobody else wanted them. I would have carried them about with me, for I felt very proud and important at having glasses of my own; but it would have taken a dray or an ice wagon at least to carry them.

A boat was lowered, Peter Bottom being in the crew of the boat, and set off with the captain standing just in front of the steersman, his head in constant danger from the handle of the long steering oar, and his stomach from the shaft of the stern oar as it swung. He had to stand, for there was no seat for him. Whaleboats are not designed for carrying passengers. But he kept his feet and his dignity at the same time, and I felt a great admiration for the way in which he did both. I was perched up in the bow, in the harpooner's place, and found the thigh-hole in the clumsy cleat a great convenience in keeping my own balance and dignity.

We were getting near enough for me to see things clearly. The vessel's starboard side was toward us, and

there hung the cutting-stage by the gangway. Strangely enough, perhaps, I had never before seen a cutting-stage. When a ship is in port they are not in evidence, and we had had no occasion yet to rig ours. It is a simple affair of three planks, the two shorter ones butted against the side of the ship and resting on the wales. The two short planks keep the outer plank, which is longer, at the proper distance from the side. The planks are bolted together at the outer corners, and are held up by ropes running from the outer corners to the main rigging at one end, and at the other to a post rising above the rail of the ship. Most of the work is done from the long outer plank, which has bolted on its inner edge posts of iron supporting a light railing. It is somewhat of a mystery why the men do not fall off of those few inches of slippery, rocking plank, with nothing at their backs but the wide ocean. They are supposed to have monkey-ropes about their waists — usually forgotten — or a line at their backs along the cutting-stage, and they have long, heavy spades in their hands, which seem to anchor them. Sometimes they do fall off among the sharks, but they rarely come to any harm. But at the time it looked to me like a very insecure footing, and I was sure any house-painter would have rejected it with scorn.

The ship turned out to be the Palm, of New Bedford, and the captain was an old friend of Captain Nelson's. The two stood apart, aft, for some time, watching the busy men about the try-pots. The men were stripped to the waist, most of them, and laughing and talking among themselves like children. Some were passing pieces of blubber from the hatch to the mincers; some were mincing the blubber on those pieces with heavy

knives much like a butcher's cleaver with a handle at each end; some were carrying the minced pieces to the try-pots; and some were stirring the mess in the pots or feeding the fire, with long, two-pronged iron forks in their hands. The black smoke billowed up over their heads, and copper gleamed red in the rays of the low western sun, and the half-naked bodies wet with sweat gleamed red, and there was a reddish tinge to the black smoke. It looked like an orgy of devils about the pots, and when the men came out from behind the try-works I almost expected to see their forked tails hanging down, and cloven feet.

I stepped carelessly nearer, and my foot slipped on the oily deck, and I should have gone down if it had not been for a strong arm that caught me about the body; and I found myself gazing into the smiling face of Peter Bottom, and at an enormous raw and bloody jaw that was just behind him in the scuppers. It was more than fifteen feet long — the jaw, not Peter's face — and it was armed with backward curved teeth, not close together, but spaced rather widely; several inches between the teeth. They did not look so very formidable; not nearly so wicked as a shark's, and the whale's upper jaw has no teeth. But whale's teeth were no new thing to me, although I had never seen a jaw freshly cut off, with the ragged and bloody flesh on it.

'What are they going to do with it, Peter?' I asked, too much interested in the jaw to thank him for catching me. 'Will they try it out? Is there oil in it?'

'Oil in what?' said Peter, looking about. 'There's oil in near everything around here. There'd have been oil in your clothes and in your hair if I hadn't been here

to catch you. Oh, it's the jaw you mean. There's no oil to speak of in it, but there's teeth. When they get eased up in the oil, they'll pull the teeth with the help of spades and a tackle. There's fine dentists among the crew, I'm thinking. And maybe they'll cut up the jawbone, for it's hard and fine, and good for scrimshawing; anything that's too big for a tooth to answer for. I'll show you, Timmie, when we get some whales of our own.'

'What will you carve, Peter?'

'What will we carve? Anything you want, lad, from an ivory spoon or a jagging-wheel, for your mother to mark pies with, to a model of the Clearchus, exact in every line and rope, and all made of ivory and silk. I brought me some silk thread for just that. Or we might make a swift, to wind off the hanks of wool. One of the boatsteerers, last voyage, made one. It was a strange thing, full of joints, and could be pulled out large or pushed in small to fit, like a lazy tongs. Oh, there's many a thing we can make, and — hello! Ahoy, there!'

As Peter spoke I turned quickly toward the try-pots, for it was there he was looking. The oil in one of the pots was being dipped out into the copper cooling-tank, and the other pot was almost ready. Something had happened to one of the men as he swung his dipper. The dipper is practically a pail of copper held in an iron ring at the end of an iron shaft about three feet long; and on the end of this shaft is a long sapling handle. I did not know, at the time, what had happened, but I found, afterwards, that the man had hit his elbow and the contents of his dipper had been emptied into the second pot. What I saw was a thin wreath of smoke rising from the pot, with a tremendous bubbling and commotion in

it, and instantly the oil burst into flame, which licked the near-by woodwork and rigging, and sent out a great volume of black smoke.

The orgy of devils about the pots became more of an orgy than ever, although the devils no longer laughed. In the weird light and the black smoke which, at times, rolled down and hid the whole thing from me, the devils ran to and fro, and there was a confusion of shoutings for perhaps a minute. Then I heard the mate's voice bellowing orders, and the other shouting grew less, but in place of it I heard the grunting of men struggling with something heavy, or using every muscle in pulling. The whole thing seemed unreal to me, like a sketch of Doré's for a scene in Hell — although at that time I had never heard of Doré — and I remember that I leaned back against the bulwarks and laughed to myself. Peter had left me, and I had moved clear of the jaw of the whale, but it never occurred to me to do anything to help. No doubt I should only have been cursed by the mate and by everybody else, for I should not have had the least idea what to do, and I did not even know the names of things. But it is nothing to my credit that I did not offer my blundering help, for I simply did not think of it.

At last the flame died away and there was but little smoke and that of a sickly grayish tinge, as if it were the ghost of what it had hoped to be. I saw the two captains standing together, aft, watching silently, and Peter joined me again, very black and dirty.

'A narrow squeak, Timmie,' he said. 'I thought the ship would catch afire in spite of us.'

'What was the matter, Peter?' I asked. 'What did it?'

He turned to me with his humorous smile. Peter Bottom always had an air of detachment in his way of looking at things which sometimes concerned him very nearly.

'Does your mother never fry doughnuts,' he said, 'in deep fat?'

I nodded — and I had a sudden lump in my throat. My mother did that, and often; and her doughnuts were — but it was not of doughnuts I was thinking.

'Well,' Peter went on, 'your mother would not have asked me that question. Does the fat never catch afire?'

I shook my head. 'It never does when mother fries them. I tried it once, and it did. Was that the reason?'

'Just that,' he said. And then our boat was ordered away, and Peter ran.

The red sun was resting on the rim of the sea as we started back. From my place in the bow I watched it, and I lost myself. Our course was directly in the golden track that led to the sun, and whales and the black smoke of blubber and oily decks had no place in my thoughts as I saw the sun sink into the sea.

CHAPTER VI

We sighted no whales that first day, although we expected to see them, and kept a sharp lookout; but the next day, having laid a course almost due south, and being then in about the latitude of Frying Pan Shoals, we raised some. I was in the maintop again, looking through my glass at the wrong place, of course. I should have done better without the glass. At the mastheads we had two Kanakas, one called the Admiral, I never could learn why. He had the most wonderful way of crying 'Bl-o-ows!' that I ever heard. The cry began on a very high and piercing falsetto, sank a little in pitch, quavered and trilled for a long time, then went up again like a bugle, and ended as clear as a bell. I wonder that it did not scare all the whales within four miles, but the whales seemed to like it.

As I sat with my eyes glued to the glass I heard the Admiral's cry begin. It startled me, for I had never heard it before, and I almost dropped the glass. I got it through my head what it was long before the Admiral had finished.

'Oh, where?' I cried. 'Where are they?'

The Admiral paid no attention to me, of course, and the other Kanaka in his hoops took up the cry in the usual melodious fashion. Then I saw the white plumes for which I had been looking for a day and a half. They were directly to leeward, and about three miles off. I found them with the glass, and I remember that I was perfectly entranced with watching them. I could not

see the bodies of the whales at that distance, and not much more than the hump shows above water, anyway, when the whales are undisturbed; but the spouts arose, at intervals, in a leisurely sort of way, much like the occasional spurt of steam from the stack of a locomotive at rest at a station. The spout of the sperm whale does not go straight up, but forward at an angle. And as the spouts rose, they went more slowly yet, and they spread out and drifted slowly for a moment, perfect plumes, and vanished.

It seemed to be a small pod of whales, I could not tell just how many, for no sooner did one come to the surface and blow, than another, having had his spoutings out, would up flukes and go down. No one could miss seeing that, the great flukes high in air just before the whale sounded, and the cry from the masthead of 'There go flukes!' seemed wholly unnecessary.

Having sounded by the simple method of throwing his flukes in the air, and pointing his body straight down, he stays down for a time which is constant for the individual whale, so far as anybody has been able to observe, and surprisingly uniform for whales in general, taking into account age, size, and sex. The time is undoubtedly determined by the reserves of oxygenated blood he has been able to accumulate in some way or other — entirely obscure to me — to enable him to close his spiracles and hold his breath for an hour or more. For a full-grown bull whale will stay down for an hour or an hour and ten minutes, and when he comes up he breathes perhaps seventy times at intervals of about eleven seconds. When he has taken the usual number of breaths, which is known as 'having his spoutings out,'

he ups flukes and goes down again. A female will stay down from thirty to forty minutes, and young whales perhaps twenty to thirty, depending upon their age and strength.

Whales are not always feeding, of course, and when not so engaged, and when they are feeling lively, they may amuse themselves with play, much as other animals do. The play of a sportive whale is not of a kind that I ever cared to join in. They sometimes come up from the depths at great speed, and throw their bodies clean out of the water. This is called 'breaching.' Breaching may not be the play of a whale that is particularly sportive, but due to an effort to clear the body of barnacles and crabs and such-like. And they sometimes raise their flukes high in air, and bring them down on the surface again, or 'lobtail,' the blow upon the surface of the water making a noise like a great gun that can be heard for a great distance.

They have other things which they do with their flukes, which seem to be endowed with a special sense of touch, like the fingers of a blind person. Indeed, as I think I have said, the sight of whales is very poor. The eyes of a whale are so placed in his head that there are considerable angles in front and behind throughout which he could see nothing if he had the best of eyes; but it is more than that. His eyes do not seem to be of the best.

I have interrupted my narrative to say something about the habits of whales, for I hope that has made it evident how hard it was for a greenhorn like me to tell the number of whales in the pod from the number of spouts that I could identify at any one time. In fact,

there were times when all had disappeared; but I stayed there, crouched on my hunkers just forward of the lubber-hole, with my back against the mast, and I watched those drifting plumes of vapor, and I was much excited and quite happy.

The boats had been lowered, the harpooners overhauling their irons as the boats were dropped into the water. I watched the four boats tossing in the sea astern of us while their crews were stepping the masts and setting the sails. Mr. Baker's boat got her sail set first, and stood away for the whales; then Mr. Brown, the third mate, who seemed to have his crew well in hand. Mr. Brown was a silent, uncommunicative man, but he knew his duties, and something more. Then came Mr. Tilton's boat, only a couple of seconds behind the third mate. Mr. Tilton was fourth mate. Last of all came Mr. Wallet, fully a minute behind the others. I am afraid I snickered at that, but it was just what I had expected and hoped for. I hardly know why I had taken such a dislike to Mr. Wallet so early in the voyage, for he had not been unpleasant to me in any way. It must have been because I thought him a poor stick.

It was a pretty sight. The weather was perfect, a moderate westerly breeze, and bright sunshine sparkling on the water, with the four boats driving ahead before the wind and spreading out fanwise as they went, and the occasional feathery spouts in the distance. The boats looked like toy boats upon a painted ocean with tiny streaks of cotton wool foam at their bows. I was not very high above them, but the whole picture was spread out before my eyes. It would have been much better at the masthead. I looked aloft as I thought of

that, with some vague idea of trying to get up there, and I saw the Admiral busy with a flag. It was a sort of dirt-colored banner, and he seemed to be trying experiments with it, hoisting it full up, then trying it at half-mast, then stretching it out at one side or at the other, or taking it in completely. He was signalling to the boats the position of the whales, which he could see very well, while the men in the boats could see them only occasionally or not at all. When the boats got near enough the Admiral put his flag away.

Meanwhile the ship was keeping off after the boats. They had been bracing the yards around slowly, for there were few men left on her besides the idlers, of whom I was one. Nobody saw me — nobody thought of me, very possibly — and I stayed crouched in the main-top and watched the boats. It did not occur to me that my duty lay on deck. Captain Nelson told me of it afterward. At the time the masthead man was the only man who caught sight of me. I caught him grinning at me several times, and wondered what he was grinning about.

The boats, by this time, had got very near the place where I had last seen the spouts, but there were none to be seen now, and all boats except Mr. Wallet's had taken in their sails, and lay rocking and waiting for the whales to come up. Mr. Wallet was still a long way behind, for even the wind seemed to help all the others more than it did him. I had my glass to my eyes, and I saw a gentle commotion in the water beyond Mr. Brown's boat, then another beyond Mr. Baker's, and almost instantly two spouts arose, very close to the boats, and the men took to their oars with a will. As the whales had just come

up, and had had no chance to breathe more than once or twice, to say nothing of having their spoutings out, they could not go down again, or if they did, they could stay down but a few minutes. This was just the condition the men had been waiting for, and they took full advantage of it. I could see Macy, the boatsteerer in Mr. Baker's boat, — the boatsteerer rows the bow oar, — take in his oar, face about toward the bow, and stand up. He fitted his thigh into the thigh-hole in the cleat, took the first harpoon from the crotch, and poised it in his two hands, leaning far forward. The chance that he was waiting for came in a few seconds, and he darted the harpoon with all his strength; instantly seized the second harpoon from the crotch, and threw that as the first one struck.

I had hardly been able to see the whale, as there was but little of him out of water, and that little only an indistinguishable dark mound; but immediately upon feeling the irons in him, he raised his flukes high in air, and brought them down upon the surface with a tremendous crash. They missed the boat, for the men had been backing water with all their might, but the miss was by a small margin, and the boat and the men in it were deluged with water. Then the boatsteerer made his way aft, and took the steering oar, and Mr. Baker went forward and selected his lance. He had no chance to use it while they were in sight, however, for the whale set off for the horizon at great speed, 'head out,' the efforts of the powerful flukes making his whole body undulate, so that his head was alternately entirely buried in the sea, and almost completely exposed, the narrow under-jaw serving as a cutwater. The last I saw of that boat, Macy, the boatsteerer, stood at the steering oar,

keeping the boat straight behind the fleeing whale, while he tried to snub the whale line completely by taking more turns around the loggerhead. A thin wreath of blue smoke was rising from the loggerhead, and one of the men was throwing water by the hatful upon it. The boat was throwing a sheet of water on each side of her bow, almost like a stream from a fire hose.

All this hardly took longer than it takes to tell it. Meanwhile Mr. Brown's boat had pulled hard for the second whale, a longer pull than Mr. Baker's. They had got almost within darting distance when Macy struck his whale, and every man in Mr. Brown's boat heard the thundering crash of the flukes on the water.

Wright, Mr. Brown's boatsteerer, took in his oar hurriedly — too hurriedly — scrambled to his place in the bow, and grabbed a harpoon; but the whale had been losing no time either, and the boat had gained but a few feet on him when he started. He was going under without throwing his flukes into the air, and he gathered speed very quickly. Wright threw the harpoon with all the force left in him after his hard pull, but it was a good twenty-five foot dart to the whale, which was going as fast as the boat, and Wright had not the strength. The harpoon fell short and nicked the whale's flukes on an up stroke, serving only to increase his speed instantly, and he disappeared.

I looked around, and could see no whales. There was Mr. Baker's boat well on its way to the Azores, with white water some distance ahead of it, marking the action of their whale's flukes as he ran. All the others had vanished, and the boats lay still on the surface of the sea in attitudes of dejection, the men seeming to be look-

ing longingly after the fleeing whales. In a few minutes I heard a cry from the masthead, and saw what the men were looking for. There, miles away, was a lone spout, and then another, and a third; and they seemed hurried. The whales had been swimming under water. We should not get near those whales again, and the boats pulled slowly to the ship.

What had happened, according to Peter, was this: Whales have some mysterious way of communicating with each other, although there may be miles of water between them. Peter did not undertake to say what the means of communication was. It may have been the blow of the flukes on the water when the whale was struck with the harpoon, although whales lobtail frequently without causing alarm in their companions. Whatever the means, old whalemen maintain that, when a whale is struck, it communicates that fact, in some way, to the others; and they become 'gallied' — frightened — and make off at once. I had seen them do so, and how could I doubt it? Of course Peter did not tell me about it at that time. He and his boat, and all the men in it, were out of sight.

Mr. Brown's crew were just coming over the side. I rushed at Aziel Wright, the boatsteerer, and shot a fusillade of questions at him, for I was worried about Mr. Baker's boat and Peter. The boat and her crew seemed to me to be as good as lost, well out of sight beyond the rim of the sea, and going strong. Wright paid no attention to me until the boat was up to the davits and the wooden brackets swung out under her keel.

When the boat was up and secure, Wright turned to

me. He was a tall, lanky man, and he could not have been over thirty, although he seemed older. He had a little hacking cough, and seemed chronically tired; but he was pleasant, and already a good friend of mine.

'What is it, Tim?' he asked. 'Mr. Baker's boat? Oh, they're all right. We're running down after them now. We may sight them any time now, or it may be dark before we find them.'

'But,' I objected, 'the whale was going faster than the ship. He'd take them —'

Wright laughed. 'True enough. There's no telling where he'd take them if he kept it up, for he was making a good ten knots, and the ship isn't making more'n five or six. But he can't keep it up a great while — twenty mile or so. We'll sight them, it's likely, in a few hours.'

'And will the whale fight when —'

'When he stops running?' Wright finished for me. 'Can't say, but 'tisn't likely, for he'll be tired. But you never can tell what a whale'll do.'

I was not wholly satisfied. 'If we don't see them before dark, how will we find them?'

'Flares,' said Wright briefly. Then, seeing that I was mystified, he proceeded to explain. I suppose he thought that he made the matter as clear as daylight. 'They'll burn flares now and then, and we'll see one of 'em, maybe more, and we'll run down and pick her up.'

I nodded, and thanked him. There was nothing else that I knew enough to ask him, although I was still unsatisfied, and I ran below to get it all down in my journal. At the time I made mere notes, in a fragmentary way, while my impressions were fresh. I wrote up the notes later. I have that journal by me now. As I look

over the scrawled and stained pages, and read the disjointed sentences, the whole thing comes back before me as if it had happened yesterday. I sent the journal home from time to time, as I had planned to do, as long as I had opportunities, and managed to carry home the part covering the last part of my cruise. My father and my mother preserved my old journal as if it were a precious thing. I found it nearly thirty years later with my father's most valuable papers.

CHAPTER VII

It was past eight bells when the boats came aboard — eight bells being, in this case, noon — and all hands had dinner. I hurried through my work of helping the steward, and ran on deck. There was no sign of Mr. Baker or of anything else on that limitless sea. The whale had run to leeward, contrary to the custom of whales, which usually run to windward when they can. The ship was rolling along in her leisurely way, almost before the wind, and making a pleasant and soothing noise under her forefoot and on either side as she rolled. Ordinarily I should have enjoyed her leisurely progress, and should have found some place which was out of sight from aft, perhaps on the heel of the bowsprit, on the principle that out of sight was out of mind. There I should have squatted, and gazed out ahead and fallen to dreaming, probably, until recalled to myself by a shout of 'Tim! Where's that boy?' But I was getting anxious about Mr. Baker's boat, and I could not understand the indifferent attitude of everybody on board. Nobody seemed to care whether he was ever found or not, although I could not see, when I came to think it over, what more could be done than was being done. The ship was going as fast as she could — nearly as fast. They could have got a little more sail on her. And the mastheads were manned.

I went up forward, and stood between the knightheads for a while, but I was ashamed to ask anybody, and I gave it up, and went below to work on my journal.

I could not keep my mind on it, however, and after half an hour or so I went on deck again. Mr. Wallet and Mr. Brown were walking to and fro, and Captain Nelson was standing by the starboard rail, not leaning, but swaying to the roll of the ship. I went and stood beside him, saying nothing.

He paid no attention to me for a long time, and I edged closer. He glanced around then, with an expression of annoyance.

'Well,' he said, 'what's the matter with you, Tim?'

'Nothing, sir,' I stammered hesitatingly. 'I was wondering about Mr. Baker.'

'Huh!' he said. 'So was I. He's all right, I guess. We're edging down that way now. Worried?'

'Well — no, sir, not if you're not.'

'Huh!' he said again, under his breath. 'Always worried, more or less, when a boat's lost. But Mr. Baker's pretty well able to take care of himself. Nothing to worry about.'

'No, sir, I suppose not, but I thought we'd sight him before this. That whale must have taken him a long way.'

The captain only grunted in reply. I did not like to press the matter, and I had turned away, when he called me back.

'Tim,' he said, 'you can take your glass to the foremasthead, if you want to, and see if you can see any sign of him.'

There was a little crinkle of amusement about his eyes as he spoke. Evidently he thought that would be the last thing I wanted. It was. As I turned and looked up, I saw that the foremasthead meant the hoops. One man

was already there, the tall, silent black man, that we called Tony. I had but just got so that I could climb in and out of the maintop without having my heart in my throat; but I was not going to let anybody know how scared I was, if I could help it, and I was not going to funk anything that the captain — the old man, as I had come to call him to myself and to others of the crew — suggested for me to do, even if he did not order it.

I turned back. 'Yes, sir,' I said in a small voice; and I started.

I was an active boy, and fairly strong for my age; and I did it somehow. I think I held my breath for the last stretch, and I know I was thoroughly scared until I got there, and Black Tony lent me a hand into the hoops.

The ship was rolling more than I had thought. On deck the roll was scarcely noticeable, but at the foremasthead it was a different matter. I found that I was being carried through an arc of fifteen or twenty feet, and at first I could do nothing but hold on to the hoop. Tony did not laugh or speak. He did not even grin, but watched me and waited, thereby earning my enduring gratitude. After a few minutes I found that I did not mind the motion so much, and I put my arms over the hoop, and took up my glass, but did not put it to my eyes.

It was beautiful weather, the sun shining brightly and pleasantly warm, and a brisk breeze, under which the sea to leeward, as far as I could see, was deep indigo, with white caps here and there which flashed dazzlingly white in the sun. It seemed to me, I remember, that I could see almost around the world, although there was a curious saucer-like effect of the water near the ship.

She seemed to be moving in the centre of a slight depression, a mile or so in diameter, and over that rim the sea curved away as it should. I was so taken up with the beauty and the breadth of view that I forgot what I had come there for, and I got to like the swing to and fro. It was as soothing as a hammock, the gulls screamed about my head, and I got to dreaming. I have never got over my liking for a wide prospect, and with such a prospect unrolled before me, I am, even now, as apt to get to dreaming as I ever was. I was too apt to do it then.

Something far off upon those bobbing waves must have attracted the attention of my unseeing eyes, for I came out of my dreaming abruptly; but the thing had gone. Again I thought I saw it, but it was of the color of a sea in shadow. I put my glass to my eyes, and searched the sea. It must have been six or seven miles off, or more, and I could not find it, but I saw only a panorama of curiously bobbing waves going straight up and down. Then I happened upon it again for an instant, as it crossed the field of my glass, what looked like the bow of a boat just rising over a sea. I was still searching for it when I felt a thump on the bottom of the ship, and a strange shivering of the mast. It was over in a second, but I had dropped my glass. If it had not been tied around my neck it would have dropped to the deck below, and it might have killed a man. That old glass was almost heavy enough to go through the deck, dropped from the masthead. I found myself staring at Black Tony, while he stared at me. Then he looked directly down into the sea below him.

What he saw there I did not know, but he gave a cry, and I felt rather than heard a sort of scraping along the

keel, and the Clearchus almost stopped, and she began to careen. She careened more and more, and up there at the masthead it seemed as if she must capsize. I did not stop to think, but a panic seized me, and I slid and scrambled down the starboard rigging until I was in the foretop. There I stood and collected my scattered wits, and realized that, in my panic, I had come down, without a thought, over rigging that I had been very much afraid of. Although the topgallant shrouds have ratlines on them on all whalers and most merchantmen, they are pretty high up and seem none too secure to a boy on them for the first time. If it had not been for my momentary scare I might be up there yet.

I was about to come down from the foretop with much dignity and a swelling of the chest, when I saw that all hands, including the officers, were looking intently into the water astern, and naturally my gaze followed theirs. The ship had recovered her equilibrium by this time, and was going serenely about her business; but, about half a cable's length in her wake, some huge, smooth body was slowly rising to the surface. At first I thought it was a whale which we had run into and over; but as it continued to rise, I saw that it was too big for a whale. It broke the surface, exposing a smooth shape like a vessel's bilge, dark-colored and covered with weed, and continued to rise very slowly until the whole length was revealed, and I could even catch glimpses of the keel. It remained on the surface for half a minute, perhaps, then a sea heaved up the stern, and the hulk began to sink as slowly and majestically as it had risen. It was the hull of some vessel, waterlogged and watersoaked so that it floated some feet below the surface of

the sea, rising and falling, or perhaps remaining stationary below the influence of the waves. It must have been afloat for years to be so covered with weed. I wondered where it had been when it met disaster; possibly on the coast of Africa, or in the Bay of Biscay, or even in some more remote seas; and how much longer would it be a plaything of ocean currents?

Captain Nelson was standing under the after house, still gazing astern, when I went to report to him. Half a dozen men, including the sailmaker who performed the duties of carpenter, and the cooper, had been sent below to see whether the Clearchus had been damaged by the collision, but the old man did not seem worried. I asked him about it, no doubt a piece of impertinence on my part.

He shook his head. 'Didn't you see where we had run over her? Didn't even scrape off the whole of the weed. Glancing blow.'

'What sort of a vessel was it, sir? Do you think it was a whaler?'

He shook his head again. 'Not a whaler. No copper on her bottom.' Then he smiled suddenly, for he had seen the whole of my performance. 'See anything up there?'

I told him that I thought I had seen a boat, but I could not be sure, there was so much mirage or something.

'Looked like a boat, did it?'

'Yes, sir. Like the bow of a boat. I couldn't see it very well. It was the color of the water, and it looked as if it was cut off, but I don't suppose it was. There was something that looked like a flag or something.'

Captain Nelson smiled more broadly. 'May have been a flag or something. How far off?'

'Eight miles, perhaps. I don't know.'

'Well, the lookout hasn't reported it, and I'm afraid you didn't see anything. I didn't know but you had seen a ghost, you came down so fast.'

'No, sir — ' I began. Then I felt myself growing red, my face and my neck, even to my body and the roots of my hair, and I stammered and stopped.

'Never mind. You got down quicker than you will again for a long time, and I was afraid you might have trouble. There was some excuse for you. I've been scared, myself.'

'Then, Captain Nelson, may I go up again?'

'Now? What do you want to go up again now for? Nothing to see up there. See if the steward doesn't want you.'

We stood on to leeward for the rest of the day without sighting the boat. I was getting really worried about it. At sunset we shortened sail, as we did always on cruising grounds. The light sails were taken in, the topsail close-reefed, and the ship was brought close to the wind, lying to during the night, so as to stay as nearly as possible in one place. If we took any chances of overrunning the boat, there was some danger that it might be lost in earnest, while, if we kept to windward of it, there was little chance of that. I stayed on deck after supper as long as I could keep my eyes open, in the hope of seeing the flare which Wright had mentioned, but I saw none. By two bells — nine o'clock — I was so sleepy that I fell asleep halfway up the main rigging, and just caught myself as I was falling, my arm hooked around the shrouds.

Men sometimes fall sound asleep on a yard, toward the end of a long watch, hanging on unconsciously by their shoulders and their legs, with an arm hooked around a stay. No officer will arouse a man in this condition, for there is great danger that he will fall overboard in his instinctive start at a command. I did not know of this at the time, but I was a little frightened at my narrow escape from a fall, and I went below and turned in at once.

I fell asleep as soon as I touched my bunk, and slept until morning. I remembered very vaguely that there was some unusual noise over my head at some time during the night, and that afterward I heard a noise in the cabin, but I did not arouse enough to wonder at it. It was only in the morning that it seemed to have any significance, and as soon as I was really awake I got into my clothes hurriedly and went on deck. There was Mr. Baker's boat on the davits, where she belonged, and there was Peter Bottom smiling at me, and there, alongside to starboard, was our first whale, floating on his side, with his flukes toward the bow, the water about him filled with sharks.

CHAPTER VIII

The water actually boiled with sharks, feasting and fighting. There was a multitude of them, big fellows, from six to twelve feet long, and they took bites about the size of a football right out of the whale's side. It was hard to see how they could do it, with their projecting snouts, and I did not make it out very well with all my watching. A shark would glide directly at the whale, about a foot or two under the surface, there would be the flash of whitish belly as he turned over, and he would glide on under, or turn without stopping; but there was always the neat, round hole where he had scooped out his mouthful. Two of the biggest sharks repeatedly threw themselves up on the carcass, from which, of course, they slipped off immediately; but they always left smooth, round holes behind them.

'And they take a good quart of oil at every mouthful,' said Peter's voice at my elbow. I had been so intent on the sharks that I had not heard him come. 'Those big fellows take more. Three of their bites would make a gallon of oil.'

I seized the chance to get from Peter the story of the capture of the whale. It was a short story in the telling, possibly because he saw that I was as much interested in the sharks as I was in the story; but I think Peter would have made no long story of it in any case.

''Tis soon told,' he said. 'He ran for four or five hours, twelve knots or more at first, then ten, and then less, but faster than the ship sails. A nice kind of a

sleigh-ride, Timmie. We had a good deal of trouble heaving close to lance him, for he was cunning and knowing, and managed to keep out of the way. He turned fin out about sunset, and we burned flares now and then while we pulled to windward. Raised the ship about four bells, but the sea was so high we had trouble getting the fluke-chain fast, and it was nearly midnight before we had the boat on the davits. Look at that, now! Wouldn't it surprise you the life there is in a shark?'

He pointed to a shark whose bowels were protruding from a cut in its belly. The shark was so intent on feasting while the feast was good that he paid no attention to an injury which, one would think, was disabling. The intestine gradually came out, and trailed in a long, wriggling line as he swam. Other sharks attacked and tore at it.

For the sharks were not having it all their own way. The cutting-stage had been rigged and lowered, and George Hall and Miller, the boatsteerers for the second mate and the fifth mate, were stationed on it with sharp spades, and were doing what damage to the sharks they could. A shark has as many lives as a cat. An enormous shark came at great speed, and threw himself fairly upon the carcass of the whale.

'Pin him through the nose!' Peter shouted. 'Pin him through the nose!'

I did not know what he was talking about, but Hall and Miller did. At the same instant they threw their spades with all their force. The aim was true, and while the shark was still wriggling on the whale both spades struck him on the projecting snout, pierced it and went

through deep into the whale's body, pinning him there. The projecting snout of the shark is the one sensitive place in his whole body. The struggles of this shark were terrific. He thrashed the water with his tail, sending up sheets of spray which drenched Hall and Miller on the cutting-stage; then the sea receded, and his tail thrashed the bare blubber with noises like explosions. The crew quickly gathered at the rail, laughing at Hall and Miller, and at the struggles of the shark. But his struggles were not fruitless, for they freed the spades from the body of the whale, and the shark slipped back into the sea. Here his struggles were more violent than ever, and the spades quickly drew out of his nose, and he made off.

Both Hall and Miller had let go the handles of their spades in the surprise of the drenching, but there were light lines attaching them loosely to the railing of the cutting-stage. They now recovered them, and were preparing to resume the slaughter, when they were called in. Cutting-in was about to begin. Hall offered me his spade, and suggested that I see if I could not get a shark or two. I was very willing to try, as I would try anything. I did not make a success of it. I might have improved if I had had time to practise, but I was called in almost immediately. I did not become a really good shot with a spade until I had my growth and strength.

Attached to the head of the mainmast — the top of the lower mast, where I had sat in the crosstrees — were two great tackles, just alike. The blocks in each of these 'cutting-tackles,' which are used to strip off and hoist in the blubber, are enormous and clumsy, reaching well above a man's knees as they rest on end on the deck.

It is possible that they use wire rope now, and iron blocks, which would be lighter and less clumsy, but wire rope and iron blocks were not used, in my time, for any such purpose. The gangway, from which two men were taking out the removable section of bulwarks, is forward of the mainmast. As all the blubber is hoisted in at the gangway, it is desirable that the pull of the tackles shall be in line with the gangway. Each of the falls, therefore, ran through a loop or eye in a large cable running to the foremast; and by hauling in on this cable the tackle could be pulled forward to a point over the line of the gangway.

As I came inboard I met the men carrying these heavy, clumsy blocks to the side, two men to each block, and staggering at that; and the artists who were to do the cutting were waiting for me to get off the stage. These artists were the mates, four of the five. The Clearchus was a five-boat ship, and had five mates to head her five boats. The fifth mate was named Snow, a little man, but of tremendous energy. Each of the four mates carried his spade, and as soon as they had reached their places on the stage the cutting-in began.

The whaling-spade is perhaps the implement most used in whaling, and for a surprising variety of purposes, but its primary purpose is for cutting. Spades are made in many sizes and shapes, or the shape of a spade may be changed by continual sharpening, or to suit the individual taste of the user. The typical blade is usually about four inches wide and a foot or so in length, with straight sides, and, normally, a straight edge. It tapers in thickness from half an inch or more at the top of the blade to about an eighth of an inch on the line where

grinding off for the edge begins; but in an old spade which has been much ground, this line is not definite or distinct, and such a spade is more like an old axe-head. Indeed, the spade is much like an axe designed to do its cutting by being pushed or thrown endwise instead of swung. Above the head of the spade is the socket for the handle, and the socket and the head are connected by a shank which may be several feet long, or may be reduced almost to nothing.

When spades are used for the purpose for which they are intended, they must be kept very sharp, and the grindstone is always in service on deck. A blow upon a bone destroys the edge of the spade, and mates are usually careful to avoid the bones; but the cutting-in is often done in a heaving sea, by a man on a single plank which may not heave in time with the body of the whale, and the spade is heavy, with a flexible sapling handle perhaps eighteen feet long, and he may not be able to see what he is cutting, three or four feet within the body of the whale; when the head is being cut off, for instance, or when cutting between the junk and the skull. Accidents will happen to the best of us. Then he throws his spade inboard, and roars for a sharp one.

Strangely enough, Mr. Wallet was the most skilful cutter we had, and he put his heart into his work, and took great interest in doing it well and quickly. He kept the others on the jump to keep up with him, and nothing put him out more than to see that any other man did not have to hurry. He was not at all of that temper in any other work that he did. In fact, he was pretty nearly a flat failure as an officer, and I often wondered

CUTTING-IN

whether it was not his great skill with the spade that held his position.

The order of the different operations in cutting-in is always necessarily about the same, but some slight variation in them is found in different ships, in accordance with the ideas of the men who do the cutting. It is usual to begin with cutting off the head at the same time that the blanket strip of blubber is unrolled. Mr. Wallet varied this practice by cutting out the tongue first, which, in the sperm whale, is moderately large, thick, and soft; then he cut off the jaw, and then severed the head from the body.

Before any cutting was done, the whale was hauled forward until his eye was opposite the gangway. Then Mr. Wallet stepped proudly out on the cutting-stage, and fastened his monkey-rope loosely to the railing of the stage. The monkey-rope is about a man's waist, the other end fast to any convenient thing, or held by another man on the ship. Its purpose is to prevent a man's falling into the sea. After Mr. Wallet came Mr. Brown, who disdained the use of the monkey-rope, as did almost all of those for whose benefit it was intended. Mr. Wallet and Mr. Brown were to be engaged in cutting the head, tongue and jaw. Mr. Tilton and Mr. Snow, the fifth mate, the little man of prodigious energy, then went on. Mr. Baker did no cutting on this whale, probably thinking that enough was enough.

The body of a dead whale, as I have said, floats on its side, with one fin uppermost. Mr. Tilton and Mr. Snow went to work at once, cutting a hole clear through the blubber, just above the fin; in fact, this hole was so near the head that it was partly through the 'white horse,'

which they call the extremely tough layer of integuments surrounding the eye and most of the head. They worked together, and the spades rose and fell in alternation, one driving his spade down on one side, then the other driving down his spade on the other side, as two axemen cut a scarf in a tree. Thus, at every stroke, there was a V-shaped piece cut out. The heavy spade is almost thrown at the place where the cut is to be made, with great accuracy, and the scarf progresses with surprising speed.

Meanwhile Mr. Wallet and Mr. Brown were busy, cutting out the tongue. Mr. Wallet found, for the first time in his career, I guessed, that he had a working partner whom he was unable to hurry. Mr. Brown matched stroke for stroke, however fast Mr. Wallet worked; and his strokes were delivered with as great accuracy as Mr. Wallet's, and with great force.

They finished the cut on that side of the tongue before Mr. Tilton and Mr. Snow had quite done cutting the hole; and, without a word, Mr. Wallet transferred his attention to the uppermost hinge of the lower jaw, probably relying on his superior knowledge of the anatomy of the whale to enable him to get the better of Mr. Brown. Mr. Wallet's knowledge, in that respect — and in that respect alone, as far as I was ever able to see — was very exact and complete. Mr. Brown's, however, if not quite equal to Mr. Wallet's, was sufficient for the occasion, and they finished their work like the artists they were, before the fourth and fifth mates had done that allotted to them.

It was the duty of these men, when the hole was cut, to cut a semicircular scarf, or deep groove, above it, and to continue this scarf at each end of the semicircle, down

past the hole, and past the side fin, making this scarf not perpendicular to the axis of the body, but slightly inclined to it, like the thread of a screw. The rearmost scarf — that toward the whale's flukes — which is the only one which is continued after the carcass has made one revolution, describes a spiral about the carcass, and the blubber unrolls in a continuous strip, about three feet wide.

The neck of a sperm whale, if he can be said to have a neck, is about the thickest part of him. It may be eleven or twelve feet through, or even more. It is here that his head is to be cut off, and the junction of the vertebra with the head must be found far within the mass of flesh; found very exactly, if the mate is to make a good clean job of it. The foremost scarf, if the cutting has been done as it should be done, marks the place where the mate must begin his cut to sever the head. Mr. Wallet, having paused ostentatiously, for the purpose of showing his righteous annoyance at the slowness of Mr. Tilton and Mr. Snow — they did not seem put out by his show of annoyance, but amused — Mr. Wallet, I say, having thrown out his chest for a minute or two, took up the cutting of the foremost scarf, and Mr. Brown joined him at it. The cutting was soon done as far down as the men could get at it.

Azevedo, Mr. Tilton's boatsteerer, was then lowered on one of the blocks of the cutting-falls, and stepped off upon the carcass. He had woolen socks upon his feet, I noticed. I noticed this, as he was accustomed to go barefoot, as were the crew pretty generally. I learned that woolen socks were supposed to give him a surer footing than anything else. He had a monkey-rope also,

although he would have gone without it if the captain would let him; but if he slipped in between the whale and the ship he would be a goner. He stood or stepped about on the body with apparent carelessness, although he did not let go his hold on the falls. My heart was in my mouth for fear that he would slip off among the swarming sharks, but he paid no attention to them, except to push aside with his foot one which had come too close. He had had long experience, and told me afterward that there was little to fear from the sharks as long as the whale was there. The gulls, too, and other scavengers of the air, had gathered, and there was a wheeling, screaming flock of them over my head. We were not so very far offshore.

Attached to the lower end of the cutting-falls was a gigantic iron hook. This hook Azevedo fitted into the hole cut through the blubber. The blubber of a whale is his skin, a peculiar cellular and fibrous structure containing the oil, and it is from five to twelve inches thick, varying with the size of the whale and the place on his body that it comes from. The blubber of the right whale is thicker. It is thickest on the back, less thick on the sides, and thinnest on his belly. On the shoulder it is very tough. Although the sea was not high, it was hard work getting the hook in place, and Azevedo grunted and sweated as he squatted or kneeled on one knee on the carcass, and the seas washed over his legs and wet him to the waist. But he got the hook in place at last, with the help of a long knife. Then he rose to his feet, holding to the falls with one hand, and gave the word to heave.

This duty of the boatsteerer is unpleasant enough at best, but when the sea is rough I have seen a man almost

drowned by the water which continually swept over him. Under such conditions the enormous hook is jerked and swayed by the roll of the ship; and he has to be constantly on the lookout that the heave of the ship and the heave of the whale, which usually will not be in the same direction at any instant, do not catch him between them.

Two men were at the gangway, to steer the sheet of blubber — called the blanket piece — as it came up, and twenty men at the windlass. When Azevedo gave the word, 'Haul taut and heave away,' the whole twenty of them pumped at the windlass, which clanked merrily at first, then more slowly as the falls took the strain; then more slowly still, with the men singing out, and puffing and grunting. The ship slowly heeled over toward the whale. Then, suddenly, there was a ripping, rending sound, the ship righted and rolled a little, and there was the hook with the end of the blanket piece of blubber in the air, clear of the carcass, which had turned part way over in the bight of the fluke-chain. I may not have said that the body is held by a loop or bight of heavy chain at the 'small,' just forward of his flukes, so that it will turn freely. In addition to this there is a chain about the lower jaw at first, but that, of course, does not hold the carcass after the jaw is cut off, which is one of the earliest operations.

Mr. Tilton and Mr. Snow continued cutting the rear scarf, Mr. Brown kept at the forward scarf, or necklace, where the head was to be cut off, and Mr. Wallet again attacked the tongue and the other hinge of the jaw as the turning of the carcass gave him opportunity. The heavy strip of blubber rose slowly as the crew pumped at the windlass, and the spades of the mates rose and fell

regularly. The tongue and the jaw were hoisted in by the second cutting-falls. That jaw looked enormous as it came in over the side. When the tackle was tight up, block to block, it was not quite clear of the gangway, and they had to swing the other end around, and heave it in. When it was on deck, it was pushed over into the port scuppers, out of the way. They then resumed work upon the blanket piece of blubber, the work of cutting off the head being carried forward at the same time.

The blanket strip was soon high in the air, the falls block to block. The steady clanking of the windlass stopped, and the men had a breathing spell of a few minutes, as Mr. Baker called 'Chock-a-block. Board blanket piece.'

Mr. Tilton stood at the gangway with a boarding-knife in his hands, and took the attitude of a man about to take part in a bayonet charge. That was virtually what he did. The boarding-knife is a sword-like blade, nearly straight, thirty inches long, and it is fixed in the end of a stout wooden handle, about three feet long. With this formidable weapon Mr. Tilton made violent lunges and plunges at the strip of blubber just above the break of the gangway, and soon had a hole through it. Through this hole an 'eye-strop' — a loop of heavy rope, through one end of which the blubber-hook passes, — was passed, and its oak toggle pounded into place on the other side and lashed, to make its hold on the blubber secure.

Meanwhile the fall of the first tackle had been secured and the strain put on the second tackle. There are two drums on the windlass, and one fall leads to each drum. The man with the boarding-knife again attacked the

strip of blubber, this time a little above the hole, and by a series of stabs and slashes he cut it across, and the upper piece swung in over the open hatch, and was lowered to the blubber room, where it was stowed, the outside — 'black skin,' as it is called — down. This proceeding surprised me, for I had supposed, without giving the matter any thought, that it would be dumped upon the deck and cut up there. I did not know what a mountain of blubber it would make, and the deck well cluttered up with the jaw and the junk and the small, as you will see. One or two of the last strips of blubber they did dump there. My surprise, I found, was justified somewhat. No more blubber is put between decks than is necessary to provide working space on deck. A big whale can be tried out in thirty-six hours, and it would only mean hoisting out almost immediately. But in this case there was a threat of rain, and rain spoils blubber.

The cutting-in proceeded rapidly. Mr. Wallet and Mr. Brown were engaged upon various dissections of the head at the same time that the blanket piece was being stripped off, and from time to time there were interruptions in the regular process of the blanket pieces to enable them to finish certain stages of the operation in the order that has been found to be proper. It is necessary that the head should be dissected into its parts and cut off before the stripping of the blanket pieces has gone very far. This is the most important operation in cutting-in, as the head of the sperm whale contains the most valuable of his products.

CHAPTER IX

The head of the sperm whale, as seen from the side, is roughly rectangular in outline, with an exaggerated upper jaw which seems out of all manner of proportion to the lower. In large whales the height of the square forehead or nose is eleven to thirteen feet, and the width of it nine to eleven feet, while the lower jaw is slender and pointed. This exaggeration of the upper part of the head does not argue anything in regard to the size of the brain, as might naturally be supposed. The brain is placed in a normal position in regard to the eye, which is a little above and behind the angle of the mouth, and appears to be set too low down in the head.

All of this huge upper part of the head is nothing but an excrescence: a tough, fibrous or fatty matter, in which there can be little feeling if there is any. Whales sometimes ram ships, striking them with that upper part of the head or nose — and sink them, too — and swim raging off, apparently little the worse for the encounter. There are some well-authenticated cases which I cannot be expected to remember, for they happened many years before I was born. I refer especially to the cases of the Ann Alexander and the Essex, which were sunk by whales, and there have been others. There is no doubt about it, although the fact has been doubted by a good many people who knew nothing about whales. You would never have found a whaleman who doubted it. I know of one case, at least, which occurred well within my recollection. The Kathleen was

sunk by a whale in 1902, several hundred miles from land, and the crew took to the boats, cheerfully enough, I do not doubt, with the prospect before them of a voyage of over a week at the very least, and possibly two or three. The master of the Kathleen lived within a block of me. His wife was on that voyage, with her parrot, which lived to tell the tale. These same Bolshevik whales can carry timbers, from the bows of ships which they have sunk, embedded in their heads for years without apparent inconvenience.

However, the primary purpose of that exaggeration of the upper jaw is not to serve as a battering ram. In the upper part of that great growth is a well of the purest oil extending very nearly the length of the head. This is called the 'case.' Just what its purpose is nobody seems to know, although there have been many guesses. One of these guesses is that the well of oil helps to float the heavy head; but this guess can hardly be right, for the head, when severed, immediately turns, with the spiracle, or blow-hole, down.

Between the case and the skull lies the 'junk,' of still tougher material than the case, but containing considerable oil, although it is not contained in a single well. The cells of the junk are from four to eight inches across, filled with faintly yellow oil, or oily substance, which is translucent when warm. The walls of these cells are composed of extremely tough, interlacing fibres, or ligaments, called 'white horse.' The separation of the junk from the case is on a very nearly horizontal line running through the nose just above the bump — or what looks like a bump. The contents of the case seem to be liquid during the life of the whale, but after the

body becomes cold, they become partly solid. The solid part is spermaceti.

The skull, if separated from the excrescence, bears some resemblance to the head of an alligator, and the eye seems to be set right enough. This separation of the head into its parts was what Mr. Wallet and Mr. Brown were proceeding to accomplish. While they were cutting the case from the junk, Macy and George Hall, boatsteerers for the first and second mates, rove ropes in each cheek for the chains which were to hold the case. When the separation was complete, the case was passed astern, held by chains, nose down in the water, until the cutting-in should be finished and the carcass cut adrift. The junk was then cut away from the skull and hoisted bodily on deck. During the operation of cutting the junk from the skull, they cut alongside and close to the skull, and as they could not see what they were cutting, but had to go by feeling, there were several spades spoiled. The cutters passed these dulled spades in on deck, and freshly sharpened spades were passed to them. I heard the noise of the grindstone during the whole operation.

They were a long time in cutting the junk and the case, and there was nothing to see except the swarming sharks, and I got tired of seeing the spades rise and fall out of sight in that mass of flesh, so I turned away. Unfortunately Mr. Baker chanced to see me, and suggested, in unnecessarily vigorous language, that if I had nothing else to do I had better turn the grindstone. I thought it best to humor him, so I went over to that device of the devil, and found Black Tony sharpening spades and Black Man'el turning for him.

Man'el looked up. 'What you want, little Tim?' he asked, grinning.

'Mr. Baker told me to turn the grindstone,' I answered.

'Aw, you go 'way f'om here,' said Man'el, his grin widening. 'I turn for Tony. You couldn't turn well enough. Nice place over there,' he went on, nodding his head sidewise toward the port rail. 'Mr. Baker won't see you.'

He looked up at Tony, who nodded in confirmation, and I found an inconspicuous place against the rail, on the side away from the cutting.

The sun was high, and it was pleasantly warm, and the oily smell from the cutting-in was not disagreeable, although I was to leeward and got it all. The sounds of the men pumping at the windlass, and the mates on the cutting-stage, and the noise of an occasionally shouted order, sounded more and more faintly in my ears until they ceased to carry their message to my brain. I heard only the screams of the seabirds wheeling above me, and I saw a glittering sea which danced before my half-closed eyes.

How long I remained in this hypnotic state, between sleeping and waking, I do not know; but I was suddenly aroused by a shout, and turned, to see what seemed to be a blackfish come sliding across the deck, straight at me. It was the small. The explanation is simple, although I did not know it at the time. As they approach the small in unrolling the blanket piece, it becomes harder and harder, for the forward end of the carcass has no support except the strip of blubber to which the hook of the cutting-falls is fast, and the raw, red shoulders hang low in the water, so that it is hard to

turn them over. When the small is reached, therefore, the carcass is cut clean through, and the forward end sent adrift, accompanied by the shoal of silent sharks and the swarming seabirds. The flukes are then cut off, and the small hoisted bodily in upon deck.

My only thought, if I had a thought, was to get out of the way of this slippery black monster. I jumped away from my place, which seemed to be its destined resting-place, the next jump being as far into the future as I had time to look. The deck was now a perilous place to make your way about on, lumbered up as it was with the jaw and the junk, and the last blanket piece of blubber, which lay pretty well across it, beside the open hatch; and it was covered with oil, as was the gangway and the rail near it. I had no time to consider or to measure chances. I went skipping lightly from floe to floe, like Eliza fleeing from the bloodhounds; and I stepped upon the piece of blubber innocently lying there, meaning to spring across the hatch. It looked firm, and there was nowhere else to step without running into something, and I was on my way and I could not stop. It did not look so very slippery. But it was slippery, and it was not firm; and my foot slipped, and the piece of blubber tipped just enough to shoot me down the open hatch.

As I went down, I caught a glimpse of an astonished brown face, in the comparative darkness of the blubber room, gazing with mouth hanging open, and wide eyes. Then I landed, sitting down, on the other pieces of blubber, which the owner of the brown face had been stowing. I struggled about there in the half darkness for some time before I could get upon my feet. I had no help from the Kanaka Tom. I thought he would

have a fit. He fairly shrieked with laughter until he could not stand, to say nothing of helping me. The pieces of blubber slipped about and threw me again and again, and when I finally managed to get up, I seemed to have been swimming in oil. My clothes were soaked with it. I had managed to keep my face and hair out of it, but that was about all.

When I got on deck again — I took good care to be aft of the hatch, and stood under the gallows by the mainmast — they were shifting the case forward, so that it should be near the gangway. A whip was already rigged at the main yardarm, which was braced forward. Every few seconds one of the crew caught sight of me standing there in my oily clothes, and he whooped and shouted with laughter. I was not sensitive about such things, and I grinned in return. The Admiral and Black Man'el were the most affected by the sight of me, the Admiral letting out such a whoop as would have scared away all the whales within ten miles. Even Black Tony, who rarely smiled and never laughed, but was always dignified and as stiff and straight as a poker, could not help smiling.

Black Tony should have been an officer of the high command in some army. He looked the part, lean, straight, and tall, dignified always, and silent and reserved, the only thing out of keeping being his thin gold earrings, and perhaps his color. I think all the other men looked up to him, even the mates, in a way; but he was not even a boatsteerer. Certainly few attempts were made to play upon him any of the rough jokes of sailors. I remember once, when we were on the Western grounds, which are to the westward of the

Azores, in the middle of the Atlantic Ocean, some poor fool did try a practical joke on him.

The case was now at the gangway, and there was no more chance for shouts of merriment on the part of the crew, for they were again at the windlass, swaying up on the cutting-tackles, which had been hooked on to the case. They could do very little with it, however, no matter how hard they pumped. The ship heeled over toward it, and there it stuck, and there it was secured, the upper, open end about on a level with the deck.

The case-bucket was then made fast to the line running through the block at the yardarm. The case-bucket looks not unlike an old-fashioned fire-bucket with a bulging bottom, except that old fire-buckets were made of leather, and the case-bucket was of wood, bound about with as many hoops as the old oaken bucket. Wright took his place at the gangway, with a wooden pole in his hands nearly twenty feet long. With this pole he pushed the bucket down, and a bucketful of the mushy contents of the case, consisting of oil and shreds of half-solidified spermaceti, plopped into it. It was then drawn up by men on the other end of the line, and emptied into a butt. As many men as could get at the open end of the well of oil were bailing with anything they could lay their hands to, the long-handled copper dippers for dipping oil out of the try-pots, buckets, tin pails without long handles. When the level of oil was lowered, the dippers without long handles became useless, of course, but the copper dippers could be used for some time. When these came up nearly empty the case-bucket worked alone.

At last the long pole in Wright's hands had been

BAILING CASE

pushed down for nearly its whole length, to the bottom of the well and the case-bucket would bring up no more oil. There was still some at the bottom of the well, however, and Black Man'el, stripped to a ragged old pair of overalls, went down with the bucket. He disappeared in the black cavern. We could see nothing of him, but the bucket made more than one trip before it brought him up again. He was a sight to see, dripping oil everywhere, his tightly curling hair full of it and of soft, silky shreds of spermaceti. I laughed at him, saying that it was my turn to laugh; but he only showed all his white teeth, replying that he liked it, and that the oil kept him warm and 'soopled' him, and recommending it to me. I could understand that it might be pleasant to bathe in oil, in case-oil, for it had an agreeable smell, faintly like that of milk as it foams in the buckets; but I could not have stood getting my hair full of it.

As Man'el came up from his oil bath, I heard laughter behind me, and other sounds of merriment and gaiety, and I turned to see the cause. There was the small, from which the blubber had been stripped, lying raw and ghastly. Some half-dozen men were gathered behind it, on the side away from the gangway, and as I looked, they began to push. It was like a game of push-ball, with the raw, red small of a whale for the ball; too heavy to be much like the real push-ball, of which, of course, I had never heard at that time. Nobody had heard of it in 1872. The ship was rolling gently, and while they had to push uphill they made little or no progress, but when she rolled to starboard, the small got to going pretty fast. The deck was slippery, and each man was pushing as hard as he could for his chuckling, hoping, I supposed,

to swing it around so that it would not go out of the gangway, for which it was aimed.

The discipline was not strict, for it does no harm to have a laughing crew; but the pushing rapidly developed into horse-play. Then Mr. Brown stopped it with a curt word, and the men fell to very industriously, but their faces were merry still, and gushes of laughter bubbled out now and then. At the next roll of the ship, the small shot from the gangway as from a catapult, and into the water nearly a couple of fathoms from the side with a tremendous splash, which wet the men at the gangway.

Of course it had to be Mr. Brown who stopped that horse-play, and I felt an admiration for his way of doing it, with two or three words, although I did not hear what he said. Mr. Baker would have stopped it sooner and more violently. I think the men were all afraid of Mr. Baker, which was, no doubt, the feeling which he wished to inspire. As for Mr. Wallet, he could not have done it in a thousand years, and it would never have occurred to him to try; but Mr. Brown stopped it at just the right point, and left the men feeling gay and high-spirited. The whole thing, while unimportant in itself, showed the feeling of the men toward our third mate, and his way of dealing with them.

CHAPTER X

THE cutting-in was over by the middle of the afternoon, for that first whale of ours was not very large. If our windlass had been as powerful as modern windlasses, we should have been able to get the case — or even the whole head — bodily on deck, and to get at the oil within it more quickly and completely. The holds of the cutting-falls had been cut away, and the empty case had drifted astern, sinking slowly as it went; the junk had been emptied of its oil, the pure, sweet oil following the spades at every cut; and men were already busy with squeezing out the shreds of spermaceti from the case-matter, two men to a tub. These men seemed to be in no hurry, and to find their task pleasant. I was naturally curious, as a boy should be, and I plunged my hand into a tub of it. I found it to be an exceedingly pleasant unguent, and the half-solidified spermaceti infinitely soothing to hands that were cut and scraped, bruised and chapped. I understood — or I thought I understood — the leisurely way in which the men were working, although this work cannot be done in a hurry and done well. If the spermaceti is not taken out pretty completely, it chars in the try-pots, and darkens the oil, which lessens its value. Head oil is the lightest in color, and the most valuable, and it is always kept separate.

Our mainyards were now aback, the mainsail furled, the topsails reefed, and the ship made very little way, rolling slowly on a drift to leeward. Some of the crew

had cleaned out the try-works, taking out the odds and ends and trash with which the pots were filled, and had laid a fire under them. Wood was used for this first fire, but after the first lot of blubber has been tried out, the scraps or 'fritters' — blubber from which the oil has been tried, and which are fried crisp — are used for feeding the fire. They burn well and fiercely, with a huge volume of nauseous black smoke. The scraps remaining from one trying-out are kept to start the fire on the next occasion.

The trying-out started on the head-matter, in order to keep the oil from contamination, and to preserve its light color. Meanwhile there were two men in the blubber room with knife and spade to cut from the blubber the pieces of flesh that had come off with it. They then cut the blanket strips into smaller pieces, roughly rectangular. These 'horse-pieces,' as they are called, were cut all the way across the blanket, and about six or eight inches wide; so that, in this case, they were strips, about three feet long and eight inches wide. They are sometimes not so long. In cutting the horse-pieces, the men generally stood on the strip in their bare feet, and cut it with a sharp spade held vertically. I knew how slippery those strips of blubber could be, and I trembled for fear that, on that unstable footing, the sharp spade might fall on the wrong spot and cut off a few of those wriggling toes, or even a foot. It would be easy. The spade was sharp and heavy, and a man might cut off his toes before he knew it; but I saw no such accident, either then or later, although I believe it was not uncommon. The men did not seem to be afraid of accidents.

When the blubber had been cut this way, the 'horse-pieces' were tossed on deck and taken to the mincers. The mincers were men — usually two — who wielded heavy, two-handled knives about two feet long, with a handle at each end; the knives being a sort of a cross between a butcher's cleaver and a carpenter's draw-knife, or more nearly, perhaps, a cleaver with a handle at each end. The mincers work against the end of a heavy block, or horse, at the height of their belts — if they happen to have belts — and chop and slice the flesh side of the blubber, with a peculiar rolling motion of the heavy knife. The mincer used both hands to hold his mincing-knife, while a second man held the horse-piece on the block. The flesh side of the blubber is cut in this way into thin strips, resembling strips of bacon, leaving the outside, or black skin, intact. These are called 'bible-leaves,' and are ready for the try-pots.

There was a pair of try-pots set in brickwork just abaft the foremast, with room to work for the men tending them. These men stand forward of the try-works. As I have said before, there was a roof, or house, over them, as is usually, but not always, the case. The fire-space underneath was separated from the deck by a low platform which projected some distance beyond the fire-doors, and this platform had under it a tank, which was always filled with water when the fire was burning, to protect the deck. The fire-doors were in the forward side of the try-works. They were of iron, and could be slid back or swung upward. Two — three, if there are three try-pots — smokestacks of copper, and of rectangular section, projected a little way above the roof.

The mates and boatsteerers officiate at the try-pots, and handle the long-handled, long-shanked devil-forks, or the skimmers, or the copper dippers. They began with the head-matter, for reasons which I have given. When this was cooked enough, it was ladled out of the try-pots with the long-handled copper dippers that I have mentioned, and into the copper cooling-tank which stood beside the try-pots. From the cooling-tank the oil overflows into a huge iron pot. From this, in turn, it is again dipped, and put into casks, or barrels, marked 'Head' or 'Case' or 'Junk.'

I did not see this last operation at this time, however. My duties lay mostly in the cabin and the steerage, with the officers and boatsteerers, and I had to go when I was called, or before if I had sense enough for it. I was expected to be on hand at meal times, or a little before, and help the steward. It was now about supper-time, and I was so interested in the process of trying-out that the steward had to send for me, or come for me, which did not improve his temper. I am afraid that I skimped my duties much of the time, but a boy of fifteen has no great sense of responsibility.

It was dark when I got back on deck. Trying-out goes on steadily, day and night, until it is done. A trying-out watch is trying in more senses than one. Each watch consists of half the crew, who are on duty for a longer time on end than usual. It is hard labor, and in a long siege of trying-out, the men get so tired and dazed and sleepy that they move in a drowse, and they will fall asleep anywhere. It is in this state that the man will nap standing at the wheel, and the man on the royal yard also, the thin stay in the hollow of his

shoulders, and an arm hooked in the running rigging.

They had finished the head-matter, and had it already ladled into casks lashed along the rail. There it would stay for a day or two until it was cool enough to stow below. They had been working on the blubber for some little time, and the smoke coming from the stacks was thick and black, except when red flames belched from them, mixed with the smoke. Sometimes, when oil got into the fire, perhaps from the boiling over of the pots, the stacks sent broad sheets of flame six or eight feet into the air. These cast a ruddy glare over everything, throwing the illuminated portions of the masts and sails and rigging into high relief, and making bloody reflections from the glistening faces and bare arms of the men, and from the crests of breaking seas. Altogether it was a scene of weirdness, but it was evil-smelling, and the whole thing smacked of evil, the men looking like devils feeding the fire to torture some poor lost soul.

The mates stood on the little platform in front of the try-pots, watching their kettles of fat, stirring them now and then with their long-handled, long-shanked devil-forks. Now and then they picked up a piece of blubber on their forks, holding it for an instant clear of the mess, to see if the oil was all tried out of it, and if it was thoroughly done. At last one of the pots was ready, and the piece of blubber, after dripping for a moment into the pot, was thrown on deck instead of being dropped back. It was crisp, and the edges curled like a piece of bacon; it sizzled as it lay there, and it would crackle when it had cooled a little. Standing at some distance from the try-pots, as I was, it made my mouth water; but I am afraid it would not have been as good as it looked. At

any rate, I was not to try it, for the fire-door was opened, and the piece of bacon thrown in with an iron fork.

The boatsteerers now came crowding around, with shallow strainers, or skimmers, about a foot across, with a perforated bottom and a long handle, and took out the pieces of blubber, letting each drain out its oil, and threw them on deck. They were the scraps, and would be used almost immediately for feeding the fires. There was an extra try-pot there, three feet across, with legs a few inches long cast on it, standing on the deck near; in fact, there were two of them. It was intended that the hot scraps should be thrown into one of these, but it was easier to throw them on deck, so that was where most of them went, although some of them got into the pot.

A piece of cold minced blubber — bible-leaves — was put into the second pot to hold it back while the first was emptied. A great square copper tank stood beside the try-works, the cooling-tank already mentioned. Although I never measured our tank, I should think it was about three feet wide by four feet long, and stood nearly five feet high. With the long-handled copper dippers the hot oil was ladled from the try-pot into this tank, which held a good deal of oil. Here the oil cooled a little, and some of the stuff, which the skimmers had not taken out, settled toward the bottom. From the side of the tank, near the top, projected an overflow spout, with a fine strainer back of it, and under the spout was kept one of those huge iron pots on short legs. The try-pot which had been emptied was now recharged with fresh minced blubber, and the operation was being repeated.

The contents of the second pot were soon ready, and

were ladled into the tank, and that try-pot recharged with fresh minced blubber. So it went on: horse-pieces, mincers, try-pots and tank. I know well that all the men concerned in the process were tired enough of it before they got through, if they thought about it at all. Perhaps they did not think, and merely did it as part of the day's work; or, at best, took pride in their individual skill in the part of the process assigned to each.

I watched the smooth stream of oil run smoking from the overflow spout with each dipperful that was ladled into the tank, while the level of the oil in the huge iron pot got higher and higher. I had had enough of watching it. We had caught one whale, had tried out less than a third of the oil, and there was blubber everywhere, and I was tired of it already. How many whales would it take to fill us up? Perhaps forty. Perhaps fifty or more if we were able to send home any of our oil. The thought of it staggered me, and I turned away.

They had already broken out some of our cargo. The cargo consisted largely of casks, which were variously labelled with chalk or white paint, and some of the new casks, light colored, with that black paint which is used in putting the addresses on wooden boxes or cases. Of the new casks some were labelled 'Bread,' some 'Flour,' and so on through our list of food that would keep. The 'bread' was not the soft kind that I was familiar with in the form of light, delicately brown loaves — my mother's. It was hardbread, or hardtack, and it looked much like dogbread, like a rock when freshly baked. Good dogbread tastes better than old hardtack, but hardtack in good condition is pretty good. It is good for the teeth. Of course there were no casks of

green vegetables, or of eggs or of butter or of milk, or of many other things which we think necessary to our well-being ashore. There were some of salt beef, such as it was. The casks which contained the bread and the flour and what-not, when they had been emptied in the regular course of events, would be filled with oil.

We had been out too short a time to empty many of these casks, and others were being hoisted from the hold, with the legend 'Heads and hoops.' There were shooks of staves, too, the staves for each cask hooped together tightly, and bearing some resemblance to fasces. If I had known at that time what fasces were, I should have expected to see the sharp head of a cutting-spade projecting from each bundle. Such a bundle might be borne before a whaling captain as the symbol of his authority. But I had never heard of fasces, and I was interested only in the process of opening the casks and getting out the heads and hoops. The bundles of staves would come later.

It did not take long to open the casks. That is perhaps the simplest form of cooperage. They opened enough to give them the heads and hoops that were needed. Then came the bundles of staves, which were undone carefully, one bundle at a time, so as not to get the staves mixed. These staves, being old and oil-soaked, were quickly set up, and the casks rolled over to join the others already lashed by the bulwarks, to be filled with hot oil. They were filled through a big copper funnel — Peter called it a tunnel — with a fine wire strainer fastened in it, and a nozzle that fitted in the bunghole of a barrel. The mouth of this funnel was large and square, and there was a double bend in its

long nose, setting off the mouth from the bunghole by a couple of feet.

They do these things differently now. There are large iron cooling-tanks below decks, and the hot oil is poured into them through a pipe which opens in the deck near the try-pots. I have no experience with them, for they were unknown to me in 1872, so that I cannot say whether the oil cools as quickly in the tanks as it did in the casks. The tanks save a great deal of work, although we had men enough to do the work except when we were very much crowded, with two or three whales at once fast alongside, waiting to be cut-in and tried out.

The casks that had been filled were beginning to show a slight ooze of oil at their seams. I was watching them when Peter Bottom stopped beside me.

He gave me a friendly smile. 'This'll never do,' he said, 'will it? 'Most all the casks leak at first. You'll hear a deal of setting up hoops before we stow it — and after, too, or the barrels might be empty, some of 'em, when we got home. A lot of oil can leak out in four years, if it's only a few drops a day.'

I made no answer, and Peter glanced at me. 'What's the matter? Little mite seasick?'

'Oh, Peter!' I said. 'The smell!'

He smiled again. 'Lor' love you,' he said, 'this is nothin'. It's pretty bad sometimes, when we've had the try-works going for three or four days and nights. Then we're so tired we can hardly stand, and there's so much oil and water over everything you can't walk the deck. Why, many a time, I've sat down and slid across the deck on the seat of my trousers. And the foul smoke

chokes and strangles you, and it feels as if it had got all through you, and you'd like to scrape your lungs with a knife, to get off the soot. Everything's covered with oil, your clothes soaked with it, your skin full of it, your feet, hands, and hair. Break a biscuit and it shines with oil, and cut a piece o' meat out o' the kid and the knife leaves its trail of oil. There's no gettin' away from it, and you fair hate yourself. But cheer up, Tim, it'll soon be over, and then you'll see such a cleanin' up as you never knew. Sperm oil washes off easy, praise the pigs!'

I was not greatly comforted. I could not stand it any longer, and I went to the stern and tried to get a breath of sweet air. There was none. All the air over that great ocean seemed to be loaded with poison from the burning scraps, and I gave it up, and turned in.

CHAPTER XI

We were working well toward the southern edge of the grounds. Whales were scarce and shy. One wise old bull succeeded in inducing Mr. Baker and Mr. Tilton to keep after him for eight hours, gradually making to windward in a heavy sea, until he finally left them, giving a snort of derision as he went. I suppose he thought that, as it was about bedtime, he would call it a day. The men came back utterly beat out and disgusted.

When no whales had even been raised for a week the ship's head was again turned to the north for a last look before making to the eastward. We had taken but one whale. The morning after the change of course I heard Mr. Baker, who had that watch, come into the cabin and knock on the captain's door. In response to the captain's roar, he asked him to come on deck and see what we had with us. I heard Captain Nelson getting up — he was never very quiet about it, especially when he was in a hurry — and I bolted out, and up the stairs at Mr. Baker's heels, expecting to see something quite unusual, a whale of enormous size, perhaps, or a large shark at least, or perhaps an enormous squid. I think I was inclined to the squid, for I had always heard of it, but I had never come across anybody who had seen one, and I was anxious to see a great squid with my own eyes — and at a safe distance.

As soon as I reached the deck I looked all around and saw nothing unusual — no squid, at any rate. The sun was not yet up, and the waters were heaving in slow

swells, although the surface was calm and there was hardly enough wind for steerage way. Deep silence was upon the sea, so that I heard it breathing — or it was as real as that. The watch stood about, or paced to and fro without a sound. The whole aspect was inexpressibly melancholy and desolate, and the silence seemed filled with evil. All the while the breathing of the sea went on, as each great roller caught up with us, and raised the ship to the top of its gentle slope, passed on from under us, dropping her into the valley. I sighed, in spite of myself, and I looked about even more carefully. There was nothing to be seen on the water except a topsail schooner quite near, and drifting along with us.

I looked up at Mr. Baker, forgetting, for the moment, the pressing matter that had brought me on deck. I could think of nothing but that gentle breathing, like the sigh of some huge, invisible monster.

'Can you hear it, Mr. Baker?' I asked.

Mr. Baker was an abrupt and rough-spoken man, though good-hearted and kind at bottom. He looked at me with a lively interest.

'Hear it!' he said. 'Hear what?'

'Can you hear the sea breathing? I can, sir.'

He burst into a roar of laughter, and I got as red as whale-meat. Mr. Baker had no imagination and I ought to have known better than to ask him. I did, but I forgot.

His laughter stopped as abruptly as it had begun. 'No, boy,' he said. 'Can't say as I do. What does it sound like?'

'I thought that it might be something, sir, that you called the captain to see — a big whale or a squid.'

'The great squid, eh?' he asked, smiling. 'And breathing, too. How big a squid did you hope to see? Big as a house?'

'Something like that, sir.'

'Big as a ship, with arms a hundred feet long, eh?' He burst into another roar of laughter. 'Been reading Melville? You haven't, eh? Well, there may be such squid, but I've never seen any of 'em, and I've never seen anybody who had. All the squid I've seen were little fellows, a foot or two long, with arms not over nine or ten feet, although Banks fishermen have got 'em up to thirty foot, they say. No, I didn't call the captain for anything of the sort. You see that schooner over there, with yards at fore and main?'

'Yes, sir.'

'Well, that's it. She's the Annie Battles, and a very fast and able boat she is. Hails from Nantucket, Coffin, master. Maybe you'll have a chance to see her again before we get through, but just look at her lines, and then look at the lines of the Clearchus.'

So I looked carefully at the lines of the Annie Battles. She was long, almost as long as the Clearchus, I judged, but she gave the impression of being quite a little smaller, because of her very different model. She had an easy entrance, easy, swelling lines, a full quarter and counter, but not too full. I could not see her beam, of course, from where we were, but it was evidently of that generous character which gives a vessel stability while not interfering with her speed. Altogether, the Annie Battles would have been called at once powerful and able. That was the term that sprang at once to a sailor's lips — an able boat, a very able boat. I heard

it from many, and it was the first thing they said. I cannot think of any form of praise that I would rather have had if I had been her designer; it means so much, speed, seaworthiness, ability to carry sail with safety. It must have given Coffin, master, a great deal of sheer pleasure merely to contemplate his vessel, there was that beauty in her.

She was rigged as a topsail schooner, with a topsail yard on each mast, a rig that I have not happened to see in any other instance. In fact, the Dobbin, a revenue cutter stationed at New Bedford a few years later, and the Era are the only other topsail schooners I remember, and they had a topsail yard only on the foremast, according to my recollection. It was a very pretty rig, but was never much in fashion, and has gone out long ago.

I was still looking at the Battles when I heard Captain Nelson's step behind me. Mr. Baker and I were standing under the gallows just forward of the mizzenmast. There is no whaleboat there, as a boat would interfere with the use of the gangway. I was at the rail, but Mr. Baker stood behind me, well in the shadow and the captain stopped beside him.

'Well, I'm damned!' he said in tones of utter disgust. Then he began to laugh. 'I am damned!' he said again. 'How long's he been there, Mr. Baker?'

Mr. Baker shook his head. 'He was there with the first streaks of daylight. I didn't see him come.'

Captain Nelson seemed to have got through with the Annie Battles. He stood gazing absently at the great smooth swells rolling up on our starboard quarter, looked off at the horizon, as if he could see beyond it,

and sniffed the air like a dog. At last he turned to Mr. Baker.

'I don't like the look of these seas,' he said. 'The glass hasn't begun to fall yet, but it will. Make the course southeast, Mr. Baker. We'll get out of this.'

'As to these seas, Tim, here, says they breathe. He hears 'em.'

Captain Nelson glanced at me with a smile. 'Does he? Well, so they do, Tim. Couldn't Mr. Baker hear it?'

'I don't know, sir. He didn't seem to, and I wasn't very sure of it, but it seemed as if I did.'

'Be sure of what you see and hear, Tim,' said the captain kindly. 'You're as likely to be right as another, as far as the evidence of your senses goes. It's only in accounting for facts that a man of knowledge and experience has the better of you.'

'Thank you, sir.'

He went to considerable pains to explain what he could, and what I could digest, about tropical hurricanes, which are most common about that season, especially just about the place where we were. It was all intensely interesting to me, and I listened in complete absorption, managing to remember most of what he told me.

Captain Nelson had not got far into the subject when he interrupted himself.

'Well, Tim,' he said, 'that's enough for this time. Better be off about your business, and we'll have another lesson before long. I want you to learn to navigate a vessel.'

This was good news to me. I knew nothing whatever

about navigation, or perhaps I should not have been so pleased. When Captain Nelson had given me some instruction, and I plunged into Bowditch by myself, I found that I had plunged into deep water without knowing how to swim. I was not satisfied to do things in a superficial way, according to formula, without knowing what I was doing, or why, and at first I had a heart-breaking struggle with mathematics beyond my preparation for it. But I happened to discover, quite by accident, in the third mate, Mr. Brown, a man who knew all that mysterious country — or those seas. Mr. Brown piloted me through those strange seas with considerable skill and great patience, so that I could attack my navigation with some satisfaction. But I am getting ahead of my story.

Flocks of petrels, or Mother Carey's chickens, were about the ship by noon, with their curious habit of flight, as if walking on the water. By the middle of the afternoon the wind had come in from the eastward, and by dark it was blowing fresh, the wind heavy and wet and increasing. Sail was reduced to reefed topsails, and the Clearchus was put as close to the wind as she would go, making a course a little south of southeast. Sailing on a taut bowline was not one of the strong points of the Clearchus. She labored a great deal, the seas slapped up against her bluff bows, she made much fuss and comparatively little headway, but considerable leeway. There was nothing to do, however, but to make everything snug, and to trust in Providence and the ship; and I turned in with no misgivings, and slept soundly.

The weather got worse as the night wore on, and I suddenly found myself sprawling on the floor. The ship

was cutting up curious antics. I crawled on my hands and knees back to my bunk, but I could not go to sleep again, although I was sleepy. My bunk was on the weather side, and first I would be standing nearly on my feet, then nearly on my head, then perhaps she would quiver and go slowly over almost on her beam ends, so that I barely escaped being rolled on to the floor again. I heard the bell striking wildly — the tongue must have got loose — until somebody went and tied it up again, lashed it tight. It must have been two or three o'clock in the morning. She seemed to ease a little, sliding down the side of each sea until I thought she must be bound for the bottom of the ocean; then rising slowly, and struggling up the side of the next, until at last she reached the top. There she paused for what seemed to me, down there in my bunk, as much as an hour, and rolled to leeward, and I held on with all my might.

I must have dropped off to sleep again, for the next thing I knew daylight was filtering in. The ship was keeping up her wild coasting down and slow struggles upward, and my muscles were sore and lame with holding on through my sleep.

Captain Nelson was on deck when I got there. He must have been there most of the night. Never in my life, before or since, have I seen such seas. They were veritable mountains, with rugged sides, long and high. When we were in a valley we on the deck were sheltered from the worst of the wind, and the oncoming sea towered so above us that I wondered whether the ship would ever be able to climb that steep slope. She did somehow. The seas were so long that she rode them easily enough; with unnatural ease, it seemed to me. At

last I discovered the explanation. They had put out oil bags during the night, bags of canvas stuffed with oakum and filled with oil. Two of these bags were fast, by lines long enough to let them trail in the water, to the ends of the spritsail yard, or spreader on the bowsprit, and one to each cathead. As they trailed in the water at the ends of their lines, the oil oozed slowly from them and formed a thin film over the water which prevented its breaking, so that the ship sailed in a little calm area of her own. This eased her wonderfully.

The best course she could make was too much to the south to please Captain Nelson, and she was hardly doing more than lie to. Soon after I came up, the foretopsail, close-reefed as it was, split from top to bottom, and in a very few minutes it was nothing but ribbons. The men had great trouble in getting in the remnants of the sail, but at last it was secured after a fashion, the strips wound about the yard like a bandage, and lashed.

One storm is much like another, except in degree. This one reached its height just before noon, and wore off considerably toward night, although it still blew with gale force. The sea went down during the next day, the wind drawing to the westward. It was a dry, puffy wind, and the men got out their wet clothes and hung them on lines all about the ship, so that we must have looked like a laundry. We had got more sail on the ship, and with a fair wind she made pretty good speed for her. A pretty sight she must have been, rolling along under courses and maintopsail with garments of all hues and descriptions festooned about her.

I went in search of Peter, and found him gazing to-

ward the southeastern horizon. He paid me no attention until I spoke.

'Is it you, lad?' he said, giving me a smile. 'I thought I saw something heaving atop of a sea. Then the sea went on, and let it down, and I lost it. There it is again, just atop of that big sea. It has the look of a cask or a barrel. Better run aft, Tim, and see what they make of it.'

I found Captain Nelson with his glass at his eye.

'A barrel,' he said to Mr. Baker, 'and an oil barrel, and half full of oil, I should guess. And there's other wreckage. Better run down that way.'

We changed our course to southeast, and in ten minutes or so we were running through all sorts of wreckage scattered over a mile or more of ocean: barrels, many of them full, and fragments of boats, and pieces of a deckhouse, and broken oars, and splinters of some vessel's rail, and other like evidence of destruction. They seemed worth further investigation, and we backed our main, while a boat was lowered. The boat came back without having been able to identify the vessel. There was no name on any of the fragments, and nothing which gave a clue; and although there were several barrels in sight, they seemed to be full of oil, and they floated awash, so that the name, if it was there, could not be seen without getting them out of the water. Mr. Baker suggested that, and made the further suggestion that they were full of oil anyway, and we would be killing two birds with one stone. He hated to see that good oil bound for Davy Jones.

Captain Nelson shook his head. It was near sunset, and the yards were braced around, and we filled off on

our course again. We sailed through more scattered wreckage for half an hour, some fragment of the good ship here and there, broken out of her light upper works. It made us all silent, each man busy with his own thoughts. They might have been, with a few minutes' streak of bad luck, the fragments of the Clearchus which were scattered over those miles of ocean. I was thinking of this, and looked out ahead, when I saw what seemed to be a spar with a broken end rise on a sea, then vanish again. It glistened in the light of the setting sun, but I thought that I had made out the broken end clearly.

I spoke of it, but the captain was already examining it through his glass.

'I've got it, Tim,' he said. He put the glass down. 'Two spars lashed together, and a man lashed to them. No sign of life in him, but we'll pick him up and see.'

We ran down to him, pretty close. It was a crazy apology for a raft, merely two spars lashed together loosely. The man had been sitting on them with his legs, from the knees down, in the water. Now his body had fallen backward, and his head rested on the spars. In his hand he gripped a hatchet. What could he have wanted with a hatchet? I asked the captain.

Captain Nelson was looking at the man, but he turned to me for an instant. 'Sharks, I'm afraid, Tim,' he said.

Just then our boat got to him, and somebody cut the lashings, and they lifted him into the boat. His legs were terribly bitten by sharks, and one foot was gone. I turned away, sick and faint.

It was dusk when they brought him aboard, still gripping his hatchet. He was breathing, but the life was

almost out of him. He was carried below, and they did what they could for him, and he was still alive when I turned in after writing what I considered a very solemn and arresting passage in my journal.

When I got on deck in the morning I saw the four Kanakas gathered about the sailmaker, who was just finishing the job of sewing up a long bundle done up in a piece of old canvas. It was the body of the man we had rescued the evening before. He had died in the night without regaining consciousness. He was a Kanaka, but beyond that one evident fact we never knew who he was, or what ship he came from.

The four Kanakas were chanting an improvised song, the Admiral singing each verse, which he seemed to be making up as he went along, and the other three joining in the chorus. The singing was soft and seemed weird to me, for I had never before heard Kanaka singing. There were a great many verses and the singing continued long after the sailmaker had got through and gone. Then the captain and other officers came, and the crew was mustered, and we all stood with uncovered heads while the captain read a very short service — or prayer, I don't know which — from a prayer book. The service took about a minute, and then they tipped up the plank and shot the body into the sea just as the sun was coming up out of it. I was at the rail, and I caught the red gleam of sunlight on the canvas as the bundle fell, making a crimson streak through the air; it struck the water, throwing the spray high, and disappeared from our sight, and it was as if that man had never been. The ceremony over, and the body, shrouded in canvas, plunging downward through the depths of ocean, the crew put on their

hats or caps and went about their business, promptly forgetting the whole matter. But I have reason to believe that the sharks did not forget, and I doubt whether that bundle ever reached bottom.

That afternoon we sighted a sail rising to the southeast. It had the look of a ship or a brig, for all we could see at first was the dim outline of square topsails; but presently the upper parts of her lower sails had risen from the sea, and they were fore-and-aft sails unmistakably. There could be but one vessel which answered that description, and that was the Annie Battles. Captain Nelson showed a curious mixture of relief and disappointment. He smiled and swore softly, and I was tempted to run and find Peter Bottom, but I did not. It was exactly what he had expected.

I remember there was a flock of petrels near the ship at the time, and my attention was divided between watching them and watching the Battles. She was running close-hauled, at which she was very good; and she got abeam of us, and very near, before I noticed that she had a brand new foretopmast. Mr. Baker and the captain, of course, had seen it long before. Mr. Baker now turned to the captain.

'We got out of it,' he said, 'better than she did.'

Captain Nelson nodded. There was a big young fellow standing near the wheel of the Battles, and looking hard at us. Mr. Baker said it was Captain Coffin. I was surprised, for, except for his size, he looked too young to be captain of anything. He was as big as my father, and seemed much like him, pleasant and easy-going and competent. He waved his hand to Captain Nelson.

'Just wanted to make sure you were all right,' he shouted.

Captain Nelson grinned. 'Much obliged,' he answered. 'All shipshape. Didn't even lose a to'gallan'mast.'

Coffin laughed at that. 'Nor a sail either, I suppose,' he retorted, pointing at our topsail yard. Some of the crew were on it at that moment, bending a new foretopsail.

Captain Nelson grinned again. 'It was so old,' he said, 'that I thought I'd better bend a new one.'

The Battles was shaking in the wind, and fell off on the other tack, and rounded under our stern. She shaved our stern so close that I could almost have reached out and grabbed the leach of her mainsail. She kept off with us on our course, but she was sailing nearly two feet to our one, and she drew ahead rapidly.

Before she had sailed our length Captain Coffin hailed again.

'Where 'you bound now?'

Captain Nelson waved his hand vaguely. 'Oh, to the east'ard,' he said, 'to the east'ard.'

'Western grounds, I suppose. We'll be waiting for you.'

CHAPTER XII

It was four or five days later that we ran into the edge of the Sargasso Sea. We should have been clear of it by good rights, but the edge of the weed had been shifted into what should have been clear ocean, possibly by the very storm that we had come through. I knew, of course, that it must be the Sargasso Sea. I had read about it in my geography without much interest, and the teacher had not seemed much more interested than I, or to know much more about it.

The idea that I had formed was of a close-packed mass of seaweed, through which a ship could no more force her way than she could through an enormous haystack. The real thing is very different. I have never been any closer to the middle than I was that day in the Clearchus and so I do not know, from the evidence of my own senses, how closely packed the weed may be; but it is not like a stack of hay at all. It consists of separate plants, or pieces of a plant, not above a foot across, every plant floating by itself. A ship would probably have no great trouble in going through what looked like a solid mass of floating weed, each separate plant giving to her passage with but little more resistance than the water.

Peter got a bucketful of water, with a plant bearing its strange freight of life: crabs, sea-horses, pipe-fish, shrimp, and slugs.

'Aye, Timmie,' he said as he dropped the bucket over the side, 'it's sargasso, and that means seaweed in some

outlandish lingo. Why they can't say seaweed when they mean seaweed is beyond me. I've seen it many a time.'

That bucket of water led to a fresh dislike of Mr. Wallet. I had made a hasty examination of it while all hands gathered around me. As soon as I could I grabbed up the bucket and ran aft with it, the water slopping over my legs as I ran. I wanted to study those strange beings at my leisure.

Suddenly remembering duties which, as was quite customary with me, I had forgotten in my interest in other things, I left my precious bucket at the head of the cabin steps, and dashed down to attend to them before anybody found out. The cabin stairs were very steep and narrow, and I ran plump into Mr. Wallet — actually collided with him, and bounced off, eliciting a grunt and a curse. I picked myself up, and he paid no more attention to me, but went on up; and I heard him stumble at the top, and curse again, violently. I chuckled, and thought no more about it; but when I went for my bucket again, I could not find it. Mr. Wallet, coming up, had stumbled over it, and had been angry, and forthwith had emptied it over the side. I would have done him an injury if I could, and I hoped he might run foul of a fighting bull whale. That was the worst thing I could think of.

I was so provoked with Mr. Wallet about the loss of that bucket of water that I pretended not to hear him when he spoke to me as I ran to the forecastle to find Peter. He was most probably only going to give me a reprimand — which I deserved — for leaving the bucket where I did, and when I seemed not to hear him, he did not follow me up. As I ran forward I looked over the

expanse of water which glittered in the sun under the brisk southerly breeze, but I saw no patches of weed. As it turned out I did not get another bucket of weed with its strange freight of life, for we had run clear of it. Never in my life have I been able to get another head of sargasso-weed. That was another grudge I bore Mr. Wallet, and still bear him. His feelings toward me were none too friendly.

I plunged below to find Peter Bottom and pour out my grievances. I found him busy, but he stopped his work — I did not even glance at it — and covered it with his hand, and listened until I had emptied my heart. When at last I had come to a hesitating stop he looked up with a twinkle in his eyes.

'Now you've got it all out, Timmie,' he said, 'you feel better, I'll warrant.'

I did feel better, and not so angry as I had been. But that means nothing. I have always been like that, with a hot heart that cools rapidly, leaving hardly enough resentment for self-respect.

I hold that anything that is worth such hot anger as I felt demands the keeping of a cold resentment long enough to do some good. A man of any stability would do that, or he would not get so angry. Captain Nelson was a man of stability, and I was already beginning to think Mr. Brown even more so. Mr. Baker was an ignorant man, except in one line, and he was hot-tempered and hard; Mr. Tilton was even more ignorant, although even-tempered enough, quick in decision in matters which he knew about, and vigorous in action; but both Mr. Baker and Mr. Tilton were men of stability. Mr. Snow was regarded as a little busybody; but

nowhere was there a good word for Mr. Wallet. His ignorance was stupendous, his talent for failure was great, no dependence could be placed on him in any kind of a pinch, and he had not the courage of a sheep. It was more or less of a mystery how he got his second mate's berth, and a still greater mystery how he held it.

'That second mate's not worth getting mad at,' Peter said, 'and he'll get his deserts sooner or later. They 'most always do. Now look. I told you I had something to show you, and here it is.'

With that he lifted his hand from the small thing it covered, which was of ivory, one of the larger teeth of our only whale. This thing of Peter's was already plainly a model of the hull of the Clearchus, although there had not been time to do more than roughly shape it. Even with the largest tooth used for it, the model was on a very small scale, only about five and a half inches long.

I forgot entirely my grievance against the second mate, and could only look at it longingly, as a dog eyes a bone, licking my chops.

Peter laughed to see me. 'Do you know what it is to be, then?'

'Anybody would know that. It will be beautiful, Peter. Do — do you suppose I'll ever be able to do anything like that?'

'You're able to do something like that now. It's nothing now, but you wait till I have it farther along. I have to shape it a bit more to make it a true copy — and it's going to be a true copy, Timmie — and then I'll cut the deck down to show the rail. Every plank, chain plate, and bolt that shows on the outside of the

ship is going to show on this model. Then I have to build the deckhouses out of plates of ivory scraped thin, and build the try-works, and step ivory masts, and rig her with ivory spars and ivory sails scraped thin as paper. And there's to be ivory blocks, and the rigging's to be silk thread. It'll be quite proper, and scraped and polished till it shines. I have it in my mind, and it grows as I get on. Aye, it'll be quite proper.'

It was quite proper. As I raise my eyes to the mantel, there sits the dainty model now. Much of the rigging of silk thread is rotten and brittle, and breaks at a touch; but the rest of Peter's handiwork is of more enduring stuff, although yellow with age. It makes me positively homesick to see the very decks that I trod, the wheel under its roof and the rail at the stern upon which I had leaned so many times, looking over the sluggish wake, the gangway with the cutting-stage in place, the great blocks of the cutting-tackles, the try-works with the bench against its after side; every detail of the ship and its fittings reproduced, even to the boats lashed to their stiff davits, the cranes swung out for them to rest upon, and the little harpoons and lances and spades in place. The paper-thin, translucent ivory sails still hang from their ivory yards and belly with the breeze. It makes me homesick, I say, and makes that time — it was a happy time, on the whole — it makes that time even more real than does my journal, which lies before me. At the time when I first saw that model, however, rough as it then was, I could only gape and smile, and I said nothing coherent, I think.

The teeth that were used for scrimshawing — and for many other purposes, for on some of the islands of the

South Seas whales' teeth had a high value — the teeth were salvaged by the crew after the cutting-in and trying-out were over. I have described the cutting off of the lower jaw, and getting it on deck, where it was put at one side, out of the way, until the more serious business of trying-out the oil and getting it below decks was over. One jaw is much like another; that is, unless it happens to be deformed, and deformed jaws are more frequently seen than one would believe. We got two, and one of them was so badly deformed that the tip of the jaw was curled tightly around twice, making a tight spiral. It has always been a mystery to me how a whale could get a living with a jaw like that, but they seem to have no difficulty in doing so. Both of our whales with freak jaws were in excellent condition. Deformation of the jaws is supposed to be due to the whales' fighting among themselves. I know of no first-hand information on that point, but the bull whales certainly fight viciously on occasion. A deformed jaw, however, is usually cleaned and kept for museum purposes.

Extracting the teeth is generally an occasion for hilarity among the crew. You will see the hinge of the great jaw at the yardarm, and a giggling, shouting mob, armed with spades and saws, about its lower end, which is on the deck. A whip tackle is also on the yard, its lower end brought down to the deck. Then they fall to with their spades, cutting the flesh away from the lower part of the tooth and loosening it, and completing the extraction by main strength, very much after the fashion of a dentist, but by means of the falls instead of forceps. Often the loop slips off of the tooth suddenly, letting down the men who are swaying away on the falls,

and starting shouts of laughter. Or the whole strip of teeth may come together, held together by the gums. When the teeth have all been drawn the jaw is sawed into slabs for convenient use, for the jawbone is very hard and close-grained.

I was to have a share of the teeth obtained in this way. Peter must have known what I wanted, for he produced a slab sawed from a tooth, and started me at once on an ivory spoon, on which I was busy for several days, in my spare time, and in much time that was not spare. Your whaleman gets so interested in his scrimshawing very often, that he neglects his duties. I was no exception. The spoon was intended for my mother. When that was done, I began an elaborate pie-marker, a jagging-wheel, also intended for my mother, and changed the destination of the spoon to my father. The pie-marker consisted of a wheel, the edge of which was to be cut in very intricate convolutions, turning in an ivory handle. I planned this handle in the figure of a sperm whale holding the wheel between his jaws, and I meant to carve him within an inch of his life. Peter did not discourage me, probably thinking that my plan was as good as another for giving me practice. I did carve him within an inch of his life, or within rather less than that; but I was not satisfied with the result, and tried to improve it, 'improving' it several times, and at last producing a very lean and skinny whale. I did not dare to make further improvements, although the whale seemed very much out of health. The carving of the wheel, too, left something to be desired, and the convolutions were less intricate than I hoped for. Peter comforted me somewhat with the observation that it

would be easier to clean, and that if I had made it as I had planned, it would have cut out a great many little pieces of dough, which would infallibly have got stuck in it, and which my mother would have had to pick out with a sharp knife or a wire — or perhaps a hairpin. That was Peter's little joke, not mine. My mother must have liked her pie-marker, crude as it was, for she used it as long as she lived, and kept it hanging from a hook in the edge of the kitchen shelf, within reach of her hand. She never had to use a hairpin on it.

We had unbroken good weather, with variable winds, mostly southerly or easterly during the first part of the passage, and westerly and northerly during the last part, but always of good strength. One morning, I remember, there was a great school of porpoises playing about the ship. They seemed even more antic than usual, leaping and diving and playing tag, and otherwise showing their contempt for a vessel which could not go any faster than the Clearchus.

Their cavortings were too much for Aziel Wright, George Hall, and Miller, three of the boatsteerers. They easily got permission, and Hall was first with a porpoise-iron, and was getting out on the jibboom. Miller got down into the forechains, Wright staying on deck. Hall and Miller got their porpoises, and then more, until there were half a dozen thumping the deck. The whole crew had gathered, and the men laid hold of the line when a porpoise was struck, and hauled him on deck by main strength.

We had porpoise-steak for two or three days after that, and then hash. Porpoise-steak tastes pretty good to a man who has been nearly two months without fresh

meat. A porpoise is really a small whale, and is roughly about the size of a swordfish. There must be comparatively few people who have not seen porpoises. The meat is much like whale-meat, but more tender and better flavored.

A fine oil is extracted from the porpoise, the best coming from the jaw. The porpoise jaw-oil is used for chronometers and watches. Mr. Baker thought we might as well get everything the porpoises had to give, and he had the blubber tried out, and the jaw-oil. There was a small quantity of jaw-oil, to which we added later.

CHAPTER XIII

I HAD reason to believe that Captain Nelson had not really expected to find any whales on the Hatteras grounds, and I know that he expected to find none on the Western grounds. Besides, it was late in the season by the time we reached the Western grounds, and it was likely that the whales would have disappeared, if they had been there at all. The mastheads were kept manned, however, as they were pretty generally.

We were rolling along easily in a light westerly breeze when Alexander, a Kanaka from Mr. Tilton's boat, sounded his falsetto cry from the foremasthead. It was early in the afternoon, and I was busy below; but I heard the quick patter of feet on deck, and I knew what it meant. So I dropped everything just where I stood, and ran up. I happened to see the spout at once, a beautiful, light, feathery thing in the bright sunlight, more like the drooping ostrich plume than ever. There was but the one spout, repeated lazily at intervals, although the others of the pod, if there were others, might have sounded, and be feeding. The volume of the spout and the force with which it was expelled, as well as the interval between spouts, indicated a full-grown bull.

The whale had been sighted off the port bow, and was now nearly abeam of us, going slowly to the westward, and making a course which took him nearer to the ship as he went on. Mr. Brown was already away, with the light westerly breeze abeam, to head him off. Mr.

Wallet, as usual, was some minutes longer in getting his sail up, and in getting under way. He headed still more to the westward. We began to wear ship, and to change our course to follow them.

The boats went on, getting nearer the course of the whale, which continued to swim with great deliberation. He seemed to be bent upon getting nowhere in particular, and likely to achieve his purpose. By the time the ship had got on her new course Mr. Brown had already taken in his sail and got his mast down, and the men were paddling until the whale should discover them. Mr. Wallet should have done the same thing. He was near enough; but he delayed, as he did invariably, a little too long. Just after he had given the order, and while his men were busy with the mast, — they had made a little more noise than necessary, perhaps, — the whale saw them, no doubt imperfectly. He hesitated for an instant, then raised his flukes and lobtailed, the blow on the water making a noise which sounded, to us on the ship, like the report of a big gun, and raised a cataract of spray and green water. This drenched the men in Mr. Brown's boat, who had paddled up on him from behind and were trying to get into position to sink their irons just behind the side fin. Wright was standing in the bow, a harpoon in his hands, and the boat was just even with the flukes. I saw the men suddenly give way hard — they had no time to change to their oars; then the whale started for Mr. Wallet's boat, and Wright let go both his irons, getting both fast, but well back toward the small instead of near the side fin, where he had hoped to place them.

The sting of the irons only served to make him the

more furious and bent upon destruction, and he rushed full-tilt upon Mr. Wallet. Mr. Brown dropped back, the men put aside their paddles, and I saw two or three turns taken about the loggerhead. Then Wright came aft, and Mr. Brown took his place in the bow, with a lance in his hand. A thin wreath of blue smoke rose from the loggerhead, although they were throwing water upon the line. Wright took another turn, and the boat plunged wildly through the sea after the whale.

The whale seemed to be annoyed by the drag of the boat all on one side of him. I thought I saw him gnash his jaws, although they were kicking up such a fuss that I could not be sure. The ship was less than half a mile away, and the ship and the whale were slowly working nearer each other. It must have been the drag of the boat which caused the whale to miss Mr. Wallet's boat, which he did by a very narrow margin, coming up for the attack about an oar's length from the starboard side, and abeam. That seemed to put him beside himself with fury, and he turned at once upon Mr. Brown, shaking his head and gnashing his jaws. As he turned, George Hall saw his chance and planted his irons deep in his other side. If Mr. Wallet had been of the quality of Hall or of some others of his men, he would have done uniformly better.

Hall's irons served to confuse the whale a little, although not to shake his purpose of destroying Mr. Brown's boat. He hesitated for an instant, but immediately went on, and disappeared a short distance from the boat. He had not sounded, however, which could be told from the way Mr. Wallet's line was going out. Hall had changed places with Mr. Wallet, and had

three or four turns around the loggerhead, although not enough to check the line entirely. I saw the men in Mr. Brown's boat back water as hard as they could, and the next instant the whale's huge head shot out of the water just ahead of the boat, the jaws gnashing. The lower jaw seemed to be crumpled up at the tip. He just missed the boat completely, but got the whale line between his jaws, and chewed it, getting a tooth through it, as I found out later, and fraying the line badly.

He came up out of the water so far that his side fin showed, and the ends of Hall's harpoons, and Mr. Brown seized that moment to lance him. He got in two thrusts with the lance, and when he withdrew it, its shank was bent almost at right angles. He did not stop to straighten it, but seized another, which, however, he had no chance to use.

As the whale went on, Mr. Brown's line slipped off his tooth. The teeth of the sperm whale are roughly conical in shape, and curved slightly backward, with a considerable space between them; and there are no teeth in the upper jaw. This will account for the fact that the line was not bitten in two at once. The lines were crossed, too, for Wright's harpoons were in the left side of the whale, while the boat from which they had come was now on his right side; and Mr. Wallet's boat had been on his right side when Hall planted his irons, but was now behind him and well to his left. Both lines had slipped over his back. Mr. Brown's men had been unable to take in the slack of their line as fast as the whale had come, and by some mischance the whale had got a turn around his jaw. By a further mischance, the whale turned again in the same direction, twisting the lines

over his back, and going over Mr. Wallet's line this time. He was pretty well tangled in the lines, and Mr. Wallet's was wrapped about his body once. Mr. Brown's men were heaving in on their line as fast as they could, and when, in the whale's frantic career, it suddenly came taut, it gripped his jaw like an Indian halter. This seemed to throw him into a frenzy. He stopped, lobtailed several times, as rapidly as such a huge mechanism can, lashing the water into foam, and caught sight of the ship, not a quarter of a mile away. Before either of the boats could haul up on him, he had started for her at full speed. Mr. Brown's line parted at the frayed spot; and before the whale had gone very far, Mr. Wallet reached down to the hatchet at his knees, raised it above his head, and cut.

What impelled Mr. Wallet to cut I do not know. Very probably he was simply afraid — panic-struck; although cutting loose from a fighting whale, vicious and frenzied, and bent upon the destruction of the boats, is perhaps not uncommon. But this whale, although vicious and frenzied, had done no harm to the boats, so far, and cutting did not seem justified. It seemed even less justified to the officers and men than it did to me. As Peter told me, in confidence, he thought there must be something wrong with that whale's sight or sense of direction, for he had missed his aim every time; missed by a little, but he had missed. It was not necessary for him to say what he thought of our second mate for cutting. I knew well enough.

The whale's very obvious intention was to ram us, and we knew what the consequences might be. The wheel was thrown hard over, and two of the officers ran

below. I have said that the old Clearchus was slow in minding her helm, but she never seemed so slow as she did on that occasion. Mr. Tilton and Mr. Baker had taken the two bomb guns, which the men had brought up from below, before the ship had changed her course five degrees. She went a little faster after that, but her course was not changed many degrees when the whale was upon us. The two bomb lances were fired over the quarter when he was less than half a dozen fathoms away. They must have made a tremendous commotion in the interior of the whale, for I could see him shiver, but he did not stop swimming immediately, although there was no power in his movements. He came on, and struck the ship a glancing blow on the quarter which shook her from keel to trucks, and I thought the foretopgallantmast would come down. The Admiral, up there in the hoops, was shaken about like a pea in a box.

After the blow, the whale stopped swimming, and rested quietly just astern of the ship — except for his shivering. It was then that Peter remarked to me on his defective sight, and observed further that if he had had a grain of sense, he would have taken the chance of Mr. Wallet's cutting to get clean away, which he might have done perfectly well. Then Mr. Baker, thinking to put a quick end to him, I suppose, fired another bomb lance into him. This had just the opposite effect. The whale stirred — no doubt he would have roared if that were customary with whales — and turned, and made for the boats.

He missed again, but passed between them with open jaws, so close to Mr. Wallet's boat that he gathered in

and crushed to splinters both oars on the port side, and almost swamped the boat with the wave he made. Mr. Brown was a little astern of Mr. Wallet, and as the whale passed him, he gave a deep thrust with the lance. He had no time to withdraw it, although he tried to, and bent the shank of the lance in his attempt.

That was not the end of misfortune. The frayed end of line from Mr. Brown's boat was not completely hauled in, and there were some fathoms still hanging down from the bow. The whale caught this frayed end between his jaws as he passed, and worried it as a terrier does a string. The effect was the same as if it had still been fast to the iron in his body. The line tautened instantly, and whirled the bow around, and then, as no attention was being given to the loggerhead end of a frayed line with a few fathoms over the bow, it began to snake out of its tub. I do not know how it happened — nobody knew — but Wright somehow got a kink in the line around his leg, and was snaked the length of the boat, kicking three men in the head on his meteoric course and out at the bow. Mr. Brown and Wright had been in the habit of doing without the kicking-strap. I have explained the kicking-strap. It is a piece of heavy line which extends loosely along the top of the clumsy cleat, and has its ends knotted under. The whale line passes under it on its way to the groove in the stem. There was nothing, therefore, to stop Wright except the frail peg in the stem, and breaking the peg was nothing to him. He disappeared overboard.

Everybody in the boat had given him up when, suddenly, the line went slack, and Wright shot to the surface. He had somehow managed to whip out his

knife and cut the line. They got him aboard the boat at once. It was very nearly the end of poor Wright. He was in great pain and almost done, his hip dislocated, although no bones were broken.

That was about the end of the whale. He went on for a little way, enveloped by the twisting lines. Then he stopped, shivered once more, and went into his flurry, spouting thick, black blood. That flurry, as I think of it now, could not have been pleasant to see, but I do not remember that it aroused any disgust in me at the time. It was not far from the ship, and I can only recollect a consuming curiosity, on my part, to see him die, and how he did it. It could not have differed very much, except in the size of the beast, from the scenes at John Green's slaughter-house.

When the whale was alongside, and the cutting-in was under way, we found that one eye was sightless and almost gone. This may have been due to fighting, as the twisted jaw was supposed to be due to that cause. I examined the jaw carefully when it was on deck, as did most of the crew. The tip of the jaw was bent sidewise, about two feet of it. It was a mystery to me, and ever since has remained a mystery, how the jawbone of a full-grown whale could be so bent. I could understand how it might be broken, but to be bent as this was, or to be curled around in a spiral, as was the case in our later specimen, it seemed to me that it would have had to be done while the whale was young, and the bone soft and cartilaginous. I could not imagine whales of that tender age fighting fiercely enough to bend a jaw or put out an eye, and I should be convinced — as to the bending of the jaw — only by actually seeing the

jaw of a whale bent in a fight with another whale. It might be sufficient if I heard of such an occurrence from a man in whose powers of observation and in whose veracity I had absolute confidence; but who would believe the yarn of the average whaleman? Whalemen are notoriously inaccurate observers, anyway.

This whale was an old one, rather old for a whale, although by no means decrepit. What that means in years of life I do not know. The natural life of a whale, barring accidents, would be expected to be of the same order as the life of an elephant, which is popularly believed to live to a great age, from one hundred to three hundred years. I should think that a whale three hundred years old would yield little oil; and this whale of ours made nearly sixty barrels.

Poor Wright! We had no surgeon, of course, better than the captain and Mr. Wallet. Wallet was a whale-surgeon. Wright was in great pain for over a week, until we got into Fayal, and his thigh swelled to great size. I used to hear him groaning at night in a subdued fashion.

CHAPTER XIV

We sighted no more whales, and made for the Azores as fast as the old Clearchus would go, which was not at a dizzying speed. Wright was in such distress that the old man was anxious to get him ashore as soon as possible. He intended to call at Fayal, anyway. In addition to Wright's necessities, there was some slight refitting to be attended to, he wanted another spare whaleboat, some oars, provisions, and other small matters. He expected to meet the tender there, too. The tender of the whaling fleet was a schooner, not what would be called fast, but faster than any whaler. She would take home the little oil we had, would have letters written since we left, and would take whatever letters we had to send. I wrote up my journal fully, and wrote letters to my father and my mother. I did not seal these, but left them to be added to at the last minute.

That whale led indirectly to an adventure of my own. I have spoken of the practical joke which a green hand tried to play on Black Tony, 'The Prince,' as we all called him. The green hand was Lupo, a Portuguese who pulled midship oar in Mr. Brown's boat, in which the Prince had the bow oar. I do not know the real cause of the attempt, and it is not important, but probably jealousy was at the bottom of it. There was real malice in it, although Lupo meant that it should pass for a joke. It happened just at twilight. I did not see the whole of it, only the Prince standing on the rail, the sharp spade in his hand instinctively raised to strike,

his head up, the most utter contempt in his gaze, as he looked down at Lupo from under half-closed eyelids. He reminded me of a tiger, and very probably he reminded Lupo of one, too. Lupo was paralyzed with fear. The Prince smiled slowly and contemptuously, and slowly lowered the spade, but said nothing, and Lupo moved. He passed near me — I was in the shadow of the foremast — muttering curses and threats as he went.

After that I was on the watch for them both, and about an hour later I saw them. The Prince seemed to have forgotten Lupo's existence, but I had not, and I kept in the shadow and watched him closely, as he edged nearer and nearer to the place where the Prince was working. We were trying-out, and everybody was busy. Lupo himself was supposed to be busy. He kept one hand back by his hip — on a knife, as it turned out — and in the other hand he carried either a mincing-knife or a boarding-knife. The light was too poor and uncertain for me to be sure which it was, but either was a formidable weapon. I remember just the feeling I had at the roots of my hair, and the prickling all over my body, and the way I smiled, for I found myself about to leap on him. I did not make up my mind to do it, I simply found that I was going to do it, and I was filled with an exaltation of joy at the knowledge. Call it what you will and explain it how you may, it was pure joy of a kind that I have known many times since, but never equal to that first time.

Well — I leaped just as he was raising his weapon, whatever it was, and as I leaped I gave a little nervous laugh of excitement. He had not seen me, and he was

startled, and dropped his weapon, which clattered on the deck. I seized him about the body, pinning his elbows to his sides; but he was larger and stronger than I was, and partially freed them. I felt a warm sting in my hip, and knew that he had used his knife. Then I got thoroughly mad. When I was in that condition I felt nothing, blows, knife thrusts, or anything else. It is a curious phenomenon, and I suppose not peculiar to myself, that in such a situation, when my rage is once completely aroused — it never took much to rouse it — I seemed to lose all sense of pain, all feeling. It was always so with me, even as a very small boy. I attacked Lupo in a fury with hands and feet and teeth. What he did to me I did not know.

The fight did not last long. Suddenly he went down; inexplicably to me until my vision cleared, and I saw Lupo lying at full length on the deck, and the Prince stooping over him, holding a mincing-knife at his throat like the knife of a guillotine. I fully expected to see him beheaded on the instant. I wanted to see his head roll away, and blood spurting from his neck.

'You move,' whispered the Prince, 'and —'

Lupo heard the whisper, and he did not move, for the edge of the knife was in contact with his throat. Then others came, and the Prince rose to his feet, laid down his mincing-knife quietly, and came and stood by me, while Lupo was led away.

'You hurt, Tim?' asked the Prince. 'He knife you?'

I laughed a little nervously. The sense of feeling had not come back completely.

'I guess so,' I answered, 'but I don't feel it.'

'Le's see,' he said. He took up a lantern and looked

me over. Lupo's knife had found only certain soft portions of my anatomy, and those far from any vital part.

The Prince laughed. 'I see. All right. No harm, but you not sit down much for a while. Better go to the old man and get fixed up, though. Good boy, Tim! Great boy! You make good fight. Tony won't forget. He won't forget.'

All this time he was patting my shoulder. Then, as I did not move, he led me aft, keeping his hand on my shoulder.

'Now go below,' he said, giving me a gentle push toward the cabin stairs.

I found Captain Nelson there, sitting at the cabin table. The row on deck had been noiseless, and he had not been disturbed. He fixed me up with some simple remedy.

'It'll bleed a few minutes,' he said. 'Let it. Now tell me the whole story. Been in a fight, have you?'

I told him the whole story, and he made no comment whatever, although I was expecting something, whether praise or blame I did not know. I never felt sure how he would take any of my exploits. But he said nothing, and I bade him good-night, and went to turn in. I did not go to sleep immediately. My wounds gave me no pain whatever, but I was still in a condition of excitement.

In the morning, however, I was so sore and lame that I dressed with difficulty. We were under way again, and Wright was no worse, although he certainly was no better. He told me that they had Lupo in irons, and that they would hand him over to the consul in Fayal, who would want my story again. This piece of informa-

tion elated me, while filling me with apprehension and nervousness. I must be sure that I had my story straight, and I wrote it out at once, while it was all fresh in my mind.

We got into Fayal in about a week. Wright was taken ashore the first thing, and put into the hands of a surgeon. We left him there. His hip was pretty bad, and he was really sick besides. He had consumption, although he would not acknowledge it. He went back to New Bedford on the tender, which left after we did, and I am afraid we all forgot him quickly.

Lupo was delivered to our consul, and was also sent back on the tender, according to the best recollection I have of the matter to be tried in New Bedford — or in the Federal Court in that district. I had to sign and swear to a deposition, which was merely a copy of my journal of the fight. When that duty was over I felt much better, for it had weighed on my mind for some days, although it turned out to be nothing but a formality, and the consul was very kind and friendly, as was everybody concerned except Lupo. I do not know what became of him.

We had about a hundred barrels of oil to send home, and to be put aboard the tender, supplies and provisions to get, and a whaleboat if we could, and two men to recruit to take the places of Wright and Lupo, and we were likely to stay there four or five days at least.

Some of us were given liberty ashore, and Peter, the Prince, Black Man'el and I undertook a tour into the interior. I cannot now remember much about that trip. I know that we wandered about the town for a half a day and saw a little white and ancient-looking chapel,

which we were told that Columbus had visited on his return from discovering America; and that we travelled on foot into the country. Fayal is less mountainous than most of the other islands, but the roads were not good. On the high ground back from the town we passed farms, and many small, round, terraced areas, not much bigger than a barn floor, with low walls of small boulders. They were floored with a very hard sort of clay. I believe these areas were used as threshing-floors. I remember best that I was pretty sore still.

Our oil was transferred, supplies and provisions on board, the new men shipped, and Captain Nelson impatient to get away; but several of the liberty men were not back, and although their liberty was not up until the next day Mr. Tilton was sent ashore with two men to find them. Mr. Tilton knew the places in Fayal where they would be likely to be, and he came back in a little over an hour, bringing the men, who were very drunk, and singing and shouting, or maudlin or sullen and vicious, according to their natures. Azevedo soused them with cold water, and we got under way at once.

In the latitude of Cape St. Roque and Pernambuco, the usual tracks for sailing ships from the United States and Europe to Cape Horn and the Cape of Good Hope converge because of the trade winds. The tracks of vessels, either sail or steam, from Cape Horn and the eastern ports of South America naturally pass through the same somewhat narrow area; but although it seems narrow when you see it on a chart, it covers six or seven degrees of longitude, which is about four hundred miles in this latitude. The chance of meeting ships here is, therefore, not so great as any one might suppose, but

we did see five ships in four days. We spoke none of them, although we did try to speak one, a big ship which Captain Nelson thought was bound to New York. He wanted to send letters, and we all hastily got together what we had to send — there was no time to write more than a half dozen words — and made up a packet.

The ship did not respond to our signal, however. She was nearly a mile away, going like a race-horse, with everything she owned on her yards, and the wind just abaft the beam. She may not have seen our signal — she may not have looked for it, her master being unwilling to go to the very considerable trouble involved in taking a packet of letters from an old whaler. At any rate, she did not stop or give any sign. She was a beautiful sight as she passed to windward under her cloud of canvas, making a good sixteen knots, bowing slowly and gracefully, and shouldering the seas out of her way, smothered in foam to her knightheads. There is nothing so beautiful as a full-rigged clipper ship with all her towering spread of sail, and with as much wind as she can stagger under. I watched her as long as I could see her, thinking that merely sailing in such a ship must be sheer pleasure such as we in the Clearchus could not realize.

We kept on down the coast of South America, but well out of sight of land, for ten days. For the first half of the time we had the southeast trades, which were very nearly east, and nothing happened to break the pleasant monotony.

CHAPTER XV

Nothing of note happened for very nearly a month. We had the usual variations of weather, good and bad, but mostly good, and no gales. We had no luck, however. Few whales were raised, and those that we did see were shy and wild, and we got none of them. It was December before we got another.

Early one morning I was out on deck. I had been sent on some errand by Mr. Wallet. I was never very quick on Mr. Wallet's errands, and I stopped by the windlass, where I was out of sight from aft, and looked forward. At the same moment the quavering cry from high over my head — 'Blo-o-ws!'

There were between three and six whales in the pod; I could not tell just how many, but I set those limits. I waited until I was sure Mr. Brown's boat would go; then I went unobtrusively and stood beside the captain, for I thought he might let me go in it. He took no notice of me, and I walked away, my heart in my boots. All five boats were away.

We had seen nothing of the Annie Battles since that day near Hatteras, except a dissolving view of her topsails going south, just as we went in to Fayal. Captain Coffin had not been waiting on the Western grounds, in spite of his promise. I think that all of us, including the officers, had completely forgotten her. I know that her very existence had slipped from my mind, and our last meeting with her was of the same order as our picking up the man with his foot bitten off by sharks, but of less

importance. Now, as I watched the boats sailing slowly over that smooth sea, and spreading out fanwise as they went, I caught sight of topmasts rising to the eastward. They must have been in plain sight for some time before I saw them, with their square topsails, for we were already raising her lower sails. It was the Battles, there could be no doubt about it.

Where we were, the wind was nothing more than a light, variable air, mostly from the southwest; but the Battles was bringing with her a brisk breeze from the southeast. I ran below to get my glass — that load of junk — and hung it about my neck. When I got on deck again the Battles seemed to be hesitating, coming up slowly into the wind, her topsails shaking and her booms evidently swinging. It was as if she no longer felt the directing hand of any man; as if there was nobody at the helm, or she had lost her rudder. I thought it queer behavior, and so did Captain Nelson. He was gazing steadfastly at her, muttering to himself, and wondering what Fred Coffin could be up to. Then he saw me with the glass hanging about my neck.

'Here, Tim,' he said, 'give me your glass, and run below and get mine.'

I gave it to him, and ran below without a word. I was gone but a couple of minutes, but when I got back I saw that the Battles had trimmed her sheets, and was paying off again.

'See anything, sir?' I asked eagerly.

He shook his head. 'Her decks haven't risen yet,' he said. 'Seems to be all right now. I didn't know but she was in trouble, and we'd better run down to her; and we haven't got much of a crew left aboard.'

The breeze had not reached the boats yet — it had not reached the whales — but the boats were very much nearer the pod of whales than the Battles was, and our mates evidently thought that they would be fast long before the Battles could lower a boat, and they held on under sail. But the whales were wandering directly away from us, and the Battles, her hesitation over, was now coming fast. I saw first one boat and then another hurriedly take in sail, and the men taking to their oars. I could see the Battles plainly through my glass, and I almost caught the wave she was carrying under her bow. Now and then I saw the top of it through the mirage, as she threw the spray high. It seemed to me that she was almost on top of the whales. She was not, of course. That phenomenon of loss of perspective in using a glass has since become familiar to me.

Suddenly the Battles came up into the wind, throwing her topsails aback. It stopped her short, all standing. Two of her boats were away almost before she had stopped, and the men in them pulling as if in a race, the boatheader throwing his weight, with his free hand, on the after oar at each stroke. It was a race in fact, and the prize was a thousand dollars or so. I forget what the price of oil was at the time, but I have the impression that it was low. The Battles men were fresh, ours were not, but I saw two of our boats. Mr. Baker's and Mr. Tilton's, it turned out, although I could not distinguish them at that distance — both had been helping the pulling in the same way that the boatheaders of the Battles had — come up on one side of a whale just as one of the boats from the Battles came up on the other side. All three harpooners seemed to dart at the same instant.

What happened then I could not see clearly. It was all pretty far away, and all I saw was a confusion of boats and men, and the great flukes of the whale rising instantly, and crashing down on the sea near one of our boats, just missing it and apparently throwing a man into the water. Then the whale started off, towing the three boats. The details I had from Peter later.

Macy and Azevedo rarely missed a dart, and they had not missed this time, in spite of their hard pull. Macy had both irons in to the hafts, and Azevedo one. Azevedo was like a bull in strength, but he was not so well placed as Macy — near the flukes — and his second iron did not bite deep, not much above the barb. When the flukes crashed down on the water Mr. Tilton's boat was deluged, and Almeida, a green hand, was so scared that he jumped overboard. They could not stop then to pick him up, but he was picked up later, badly frightened, but none the worse otherwise. It is doubtful whether any one in Mr. Tilton's boat gave him a thought, for the whale had started running.

Nobody in either Mr. Baker's boat or in Mr. Tilton's seemed to know definitely who had struck first, although they all said, with more or less emphasis, Macy or Azevedo. There was no agreement as to which of the two it was, all in Mr. Baker's boat saying Macy, and all in Mr. Tilton's saying Azevedo; and I really think there can be no doubt that all three boats had struck at as nearly the same instant as possible. Certainly the Battles' men held up their end of the argument a little later. The whale did not run fast nor far, with three boats towing, and every man in every boat heaving on his line for all he

was worth. The three mates were standing in the bows with lances poised in their hands; and Mr. Baker, seeing a chance, pitchpoled. At the same instant the mate of the Battles — if it was the mate — also pitchpoled. Peter said it was a pretty sight to see the two lances in the air at the same time, as if they were from two guns fired with the same lanyard. The lances flew true, and pierced the whale at the same moment. They were drawn back by the light warps attached to the hafts, each man working frantically. Mr. Baker was a trifle quicker in recovery. The boat was almost within reach of the whale, but not quite, and he darted the lance with great force. The Battles' boat was a little nearer the whale, and its lance was held for a second while the men heaved again. Then it was plunged into the side of the whale.

Not one of the three boats took even the usual precautions, which seem little enough, but what chance had the whale with three lances being churned up and down in his in'ards? He just lay still and quivered, spouting thick blood, and gave up the ghost. Then came a ticklish time.

'For a quarter of an hour,' said Peter, who was telling me the story, 'I didn't know whether there was going to be a fight or not, but I rather thought there was. Mr. Baker and the mate of the Battles — he was one of the mates, I s'pose — had it back and forth across the back of the whale, and they both got pretty mad. Mr. Baker said they were first up.

'"You were not!" said the Battles' mate. "I was first up. But what has that to do with it anyway? Our iron struck first."

"'Like hell," said Mr. Baker. "Macy's iron struck first. Whale's ours. I'd swear to it."

"'No doubt," said the Battles' mate; "but that don't make it so."

"'What d'ye mean?" said Mr. Baker. "Call me a liar, do you?"

"'I'll call you anything you like!" said the Battles' mate. "I'll call you thief if you take this whale. It's ours."

'Mr. Baker gave him back as good as he sent, and they got madder and madder. Just as I thought they were going to get in a fight over it, Mr. Baker began to cool down, and the Battles' mate began to cool down too. We were two boats to his one, and if we chose to just take the whale, he couldn't prevent us, and he knew it. Mr. Baker didn't want to do it that way, and he knew well enough what the old man would think of it.

"'Tell you what," he said. "We don't want to fight about it. That wouldn't do you any good, nor me either, though we could do what we pleased if it came to a fight. We'll see Cap'n Coffin and fix it up with him."'

"'Fix it up with me, here and now," said the Battles' mate. "You can't see Cap'n Coffin. He's confined to his cabin."

"'Confined to his cabin!" said Mr. Baker. "What's the matter with him?"

"'Nothing much," said the Battles' mate. "Sticks in his cabin, and won't see anybody."

"'That's queer," said Mr. Baker. "How does he give his orders?"

"'Instructions in writing to be left on the cabin table

every morning. No business of yours, but I don't mind telling you."

'"Queer!" said Mr. Baker. "Very queer."

'It is mighty queer, too, when you come to think of it,' said Peter. 'But I don't know the rights of it.

'The Battles' mate was impatient. "Well," he says, "what 'you got to say?"

'Mr. Baker kind o' smiled. "Fair division," he says; "we'll take the blubber, and you take the carcass."

'"*What!*" roars the Battles' mate. "What the —" Then his eye falls on the whale, and travels over it, what you can see of it, and that ain't much. He scratched his head, his eye travelling over the whale from end to end. "I'll take you," he says quietly. "The carcass to be whole, and to be delivered at our side. Does the carcass include the case?"

'"The carcass does *not* include the case," said Mr. Baker, very sarcastic. He had been looking the whale over. "Don't you think you've got enough?"

'"I'll take a chance," said the Battles' mate, smiling. "Delivered at our side, remember."

'"I'll go halfway," said Mr. Baker. "Be ready to take it there. I'll stand to my bargain, but I've an idea that the joke's on me."

'And the joke's on him, I'm thinking, Tim, and on us. Come and take a look.'

He led me to the side. The whale we had been talking about, with one other, lay there below us.

'Now,' said Peter, 'if you'll notice, that whale looks kind o' thin and withered-like for a whale of his size. It's not enough to see unless you were taking special notice, but the Battles' mate was; and it's my idea that

he'll not make more'n thirty-five or forty barrel, when he ought to make sixty. The Battles' mate no doubt expects to find ambergris in him, and Mr. Baker thinks he will, and I think he will — unless we can find a way to get it out of him without cutting him open. Mr. Baker gave his word not to cut the carcass.'

'How could they do that, Peter?'

'Well, Tim, I've never seen it done, but we could try. Swing an anchor, or some other heavy thing, say a hogshead o' water, above him, and let it drop a few times on his stomach or his insides so's to stir 'em up well, and we might get a little. It'd be worth trying.'

When we had finished cutting-in, we did try just that. I suppose they were afraid an anchor would tear the carcass, but a cask of sea-water would not. We salvaged a few scraps of ambergris, about a thousand dollars' worth, just enough to let the officers know what a poor bargain Mr. Baker had made. I never knew how much of the stuff the Battles got from this whale. Probably ten times as much.

Altogether that was one of our unlucky days. Mr. Wallet let the Annie Battles herself get between him and his whale, and take it away from him. He did not exert himself or his men to get it, it seemed to us, and Captain Nelson's displeasure was clear enough. I have no doubt it was clear to Mr. Wallet, for I saw the captain talk forcibly to him when he came aboard, although I do not know what he said. Mr. Snow being on the end of the line farthest from the Battles, got his whale without molestation.

Mr. Brown's boat fared the worst. He was waiting for his whale to rise, and the second boat from the Battles

came up opposite him, and waited also. When the whale rose, Starbuck struck him first. There could be no doubt about it. I saw it all clearly through my glass. Notwithstanding, the Battles' boat pulled up at once, and sunk an iron in him. At that third iron — Starbuck had two irons fast — the whale started to run, and we had to give him line. While the line was snaking out, rather slack somehow or other, for the second time on that voyage, it kinked and caught a man in the kink. It was Kane who was caught, about his arm or shoulder. He had not far to go, for Mr. Brown had put back his kicking-strap immediately after the accident to poor Wright; but his going those few feet was rather sudden. The kicking-strap stopped him. That might have been as unfortunate for him as being taken overboard, but Mr. Brown, who had changed places with Starbuck, saw it almost before it happened, and reached for the hatchet and cut. His action was lightning-like in its quickness. Although Kane brought up on the kicking-strap, he did not have to start the heavy boat, or quite possibly his arm might have been torn out. As it was, he got off with a severe wrench to his shoulder, and with a badly bruised arm. His arm turned black where the kink had caught it, and showed the lay of the line plainly

That was the end of that whale for us. The Battles' boat got him.

CHAPTER XVI

Our officers were all highly indignant at the conduct of the Battles, which was contrary to all the ethics of whaling, if not to the law of the high seas. I overheard Captain Nelson talking with Mr. Baker, who got very vehement about it, and wanted to take Starbuck's whale away from them by force.

Captain Nelson was quiet for a moment, stroking his beard, which had got pretty ragged.

'Some excuse, perhaps,' he said at last. 'Kind of a row with Fred three or four weeks before we sailed. My house. Maybe I was a little trifle hasty, but so was he. Both got mad, and I said more than I meant to. Never thought he'd — well, I'll go aboard of him in the morning, and see if I can't fix it up.'

We were not to know the results of Captain Nelson's visit, for he did not make it. The Annie Battles had finished cutting-in during the night, and at dawn her topsails were just dropping over the horizon to the eastward. We followed. There was no chance of our catching her, of course, unless she hove to to try out, and we could creep up on her unbeknownst, like 'Zekiel. We soon lost her; and although we kept on to the eastward for a couple of days, Captain Nelson was not yet ready to leave those cruising grounds. He would not be ready for that, with average luck, for weeks, and it was like looking for a needle in a haystack, with the additional disadvantage that, even if we found the needle, it would slip away at the first sight of us. At

the end of the second day we came about, and worked back across the grounds.

While making a passage from one cruising ground to another the distribution of duties is much the same as on a merchant vessel. When whaling grounds have been reached, however, all this is changed. Each boat's crew constitutes a watch, and the night, from four bells to four bells — from six in the evening to six in the morning — is divided among them. The officer of the watch is the boatheader, or mate. A watch, for a four-boat ship, is thus three hours long, and for a five-boat ship, such as ours, two hours and forty minutes. This easing up on the men is in order that they may be as fresh as possible for the chase and taking of whales, which is their first and most important business. For the same reason the crew has only the most necessary duties during the day; and except for the necessary change of sails morning and night, and washing down and scrubbing the decks each morning, the day is passed in utter idleness, so far as regular ship's duties are concerned. The men are allowed to do what they please: read — if they can read — play cards, mend clothes, scrimshaw, sleep.

During the day the ship stands along under easy sail so that nothing will be missed, usually going to windward slowly, tacking or beating; picking up whales if they are seen and can be got. At sunset light sails are taken in, topsails close-reefed, and everything done to insure the ship's making as little progress as possible during the night. They even wear ship occasionally, to keep in the same place throughout the night. At six in the morning — four bells — or perhaps earlier if they

are in the more temperate latitudes, the crew is called up, sail restored, decks washed and scrubbed, and she is off again on her beating to windward. It made me think of the terns fishing off Ricketson's Point in Padanaram: tacking slowly, beating to windward, the eyes above the coral-red bill, like a man at the masthead, keeping a bright lookout for fish; then coming down swiftly with the wind to the leeward side of their cruising ground to begin once more their slow beating against the wind. In just this way, when the ship has reached the windward edge of her cruising ground, she wears around, and comes down before it, to repeat the process until the old man has tired of it.

We had been doing this for three weeks, since the Annie Battles parted from us, without taking any whales. We had seen but two spouts, and lowered once without result. The other spout was sighted about sunset, and we did not lower. I was standing, one morning, by the rail, as I was always doing when I had a chance, and Macy was walking the deck behind me. As he was passing I turned to him.

'No sign of the Battles,' I said. I had been thinking of her, and my remark was only the continuation of my thought.

'No sign of the Battles,' he said cheerfully, stopping by me for a moment. 'I'm glad of it. I thought we should surely see her again before this, but we haven't, and good riddance, I say.'

He began his pacing the deck again, and I strolled forward. I found Peter sitting beside the windlass, working on his model. I never knew Peter to be asleep. He did not seem to need sleep. I told him what Macy had said.

'Aye, Tim,' he said, 'and I hope so too. The sea's a big place, but it's a little place, too, and you're always running across some vessel you don't want to see, 'specially when she's on the same business as yourself. One voyage I made to eastern ports, Canton, Hong Kong, Shanghai, Manila, and the like, I was always meeting Tim Fernand, who'd been my shipmate in the navy. He'd shipped on the Mary Easton, and she followed us around from port to port, or beat us to it. I was hard put to it to get rid of him, for he'd fasten on me like a leech, and he was a robber.'

'Like the Annie Battles.'

Peter looked up at me with a smile in his eyes, but said nothing, and then there came down to us from the masthead the familiar, quavering cry. Peter sighed, put down his model, and got up. It was a single spout — from a lone whale, so far as he could judge — miles off to the southeast. Peter turned back to me.

'Speak of the devil,' he said. 'Do you see, Tim? Just there, well beyond the whale? What do you make of it?'

I was a long time in seeing anything, but at last I made out dimly the two slender topmasts with their yards, but no sails.

'Cutting-in, like as not,' said Peter. 'If she was trying-out you'd see the smoke.'

We headed up toward the whale, and when we were near enough, Mr. Wallet and Mr. Brown lowered. The whale led them a leisurely chase directly toward the Battles, and we followed. Mr. Brown got fast, but Mr. Wallet did not. He sailed on after the whale, which was running away with Mr. Brown. The whale was going much faster than Mr. Wallet's boat was, and it was a

losing chase from the moment Mr. Brown struck. We wondered, and snickered, for it was so like Wallet. As Peter said, it was like a drunken man chasing his hat, always hoping it would stop, and always keeping after it with the one fixed idea. But Peter was wrong about the idea. If Mr. Wallet had a fixed idea it was not what Peter — and all of us who watched — thought it was, for he sailed straight up to the side of the Battles. Although we had got within three miles of her, I could not see clearly what was happening then, but Peter could. His eyes were better than mine, in spite of his age.

'Now, what do you make of that?' he cried. 'They're holding her there, and the Battles' crew ain't making any sort of objection that I c'n see. It's a queer vessel and a queer crew and queer doings, and Cap'n Coffin's the queerest of the lot, if you believe what they say of him — which I don't. There goes Mr. Wallet over the side, and that's queerer yet. Mebbe he thinks he can clear up the queerness, but I miss my guess if that's what he thinks. If it was the old man himself, now, or Mr. Baker, say, or Mr. Brown, I'd say it would be cleared up, but 'tween you and me, I doubt Mr. Wallet can if he tries, and I doubt he tries.'

'What do you suppose, Peter,' I asked, 'he means to —'

'I ain't had time to s'pose anything, Tim,' said Peter. 'There's George Hall, now, wanting to go abroad, and they won't let him. Tell him to cast off and keep off. I c'n almost hear 'em say it. Quite a crowd of 'em along by the gangway, and all motioning him off. They were cutting-in, as I thought, and they've let the carcass go adrift. You can see it, I guess, going astern, just awash.

Now some of 'em take spades, and jab at the boathook, and they're getting sail on her.'

Peter's bulletins stopped, and we just stood there, gazing in silence.

'That Wallet,' he said at last, ''s got more sense than I gave him credit for. You see, Tim, if it's desertion, which is more'n likely, and if we ever get hold of him again, he'll say that he was kidnapped by that crew of pickpockets. It'd be hard to prove 't he wasn't, and it wouldn't make much difference whether anybody believed it or not. If we don't get him — and I should think that the old man'd be glad to be rid of him — we'll never know the rights of it, or what'll be done about his lay in our take so far. I don't know what course the — Aye, aye, sir.'

For Mr. Baker's boat was called away, and Peter ran. Captain Nelson himself took the boat, and the men pulled hard for the Battles; but her mainsail was already up, and they got the foresail up and broke out a jib, and she stood off on the wind before the boat had gone half a mile. It was hopeless to chase her, and Captain Nelson came back. He was very sober and stern as he came over the side, and we watched the square topsails of the Battles gradually sinking to the eastward, while we got ready to receive Mr. Brown and his whale.

As soon as the cutting-in and trying-out was finished we made sail, and headed for Montevideo. It was within a couple of days of Christmas and the men hoped for some liberty ashore. Captain Nelson was governed by other reasons in making for port; he wanted to send letters, as it turned out, chiefly on account of the mysterious behavior of the Battles, and the desertion of Wallet,

I suppose, although I never knew definitely. He let it be known that any letters would be sent, and I wrote home, but by a piece of carelessness of my own, my letter did not go.

We did not get into Montevideo by Christmas, as we had been more than three hundred miles from the coast; and we had to be content with the usual ship's fare on that day, with the addition of plum duff and a serving of rum. I did not take the rum, of course, but I took the duff, which tasted good enough, although it was nothing more than soggy dumpling, with molasses over it. I could not help thinking of my mother's dumplings — food of a different species — and of the turkey and cranberry sauce, and the pumpkin and apple pies, and the apples and nuts and raisins to which my family were sitting down on that day. No doubt they were thinking of me.

At Montevideo, which we reached in the afternoon of the twenty-sixth, the captain sent his letters and tried to ship another man. This he was unable to do, and he had to sail without him, a man short. The men were disappointed in their hoped-for liberty, only one boat's crew getting two hours' liberty. This crew was chosen with some care, as the men must be those who could be relied upon to return at the end of their two hours. We sailed at sunset, with some grumbling on the part of the men.

Nothing was done about the second mate's berth for more than a week, and I did not happen to hear him mentioned, although I have an idea that the captain talked the matter over with Mr. Baker. At last, however, he acted, having concluded, as I supposed, that

there was little chance of getting Mr. Wallet back. There was some show of letting the men choose, but it amounted to nothing. Macy was made fifth mate, and the other mates moved up a peg, so that Mr. Brown was second mate. That pleased me, and the appointment of Macy pleased Peter, for he said that there was not a better man on the ship. I agreed with him in that. Macy was one of the finest specimens of man I have ever seen. He was over six feet tall, with a perfectly proportioned figure, but his perfect proportions did not give an adequate idea of his size unless he stood beside another man. He had rather tightly curling flaxen hair — we called him 'Towhead' — and deep blue eyes, and a smile that won the heart of every one on whom it shone.

CHAPTER XVII

THERE was no unfavorable change in the weather, and we cruised for three weeks without getting a whale, or even raising a spout. One morning, however, after a rather thick haze had cleared away somewhat, we found ourselves within half a mile of a pod of six or seven, which were lying on the surface, spouting lazily. They did not seem to be feeding, and I remember that I had heard a distant splash while it was still too thick to see them, and Peter, to whom I had turned inquiringly, had said that it was likely a whale breaching. Almost everybody on board had heard it, and the lookouts were doubled. They fully expected to sight whales, and they did sight them from the masthead before we could see them from the deck. No cry was given, but the men came down and reported.

There was hardly a breath of wind, and sound would carry easily in that weather. Indeed, it was uncanny. There seemed to be streaks or columns in the air which reflected the sound in the strangest ways, or acted like a lens for sound, at one moment utterly cutting off sounds that originated but a short distance away, and at the next moment sending to us clearly faint noises made by the pod of whales at a half-mile distance. Boats were lowered with the utmost care not to make a noise, even being put into the water one end first, to avoid any splash. The men were cautioned not to talk, and they sat silent in their boats, cast off the falls quietly, and took to their paddles as soon as the boats were in the

water. It was of no use, however. The whales were keeping tabs on us, and went down quietly when a boat was within quarter of a mile of them, coming up half a mile away. It was exasperating. There were whales almost at the side, more than we had taken in six months, and we could not get near them; and after trying for hours, the boats were called back to the ship.

I do not remember that I felt any disappointment, however. To tell the truth, I was rather hoping for a pampero. It is not a fish, but a wind.

I had my wish gratified, and I shall never make another wish of that kind. We were sailing along easily in a moderate northerly wind about the middle of the afternoon when the Admiral's cry came down to us. There were two spouts to the eastward. I watched them rather listlessly, for I had rather lost interest in spouts. An albatross or a frigate bird would have roused much more interest. We were seeing albatrosses occasionally, and one had followed the ship for two days, picking up scraps from the galley, and finally following the carcass of a whale when we cut it adrift. But the whole whale business had become a matter of routine.

Three boats were called away, Mr. Baker's, Mr. Brown's, and Mr. Macy's. I had to move, for I was in the way of one of them; and I moved as little as possible, and gave them no further attention. Then I heard Mr. Brown speaking to me.

'Here, Tim,' he said. 'If you think you can pull one of these oars, tumble in here, but be quick about it.'

Instantly I was all attention. I jumped for the boat, but stopped.

'The Captain said,' I objected, 'that I couldn't go until he —'

'Captain's orders,' he interrupted sharply. 'Go or not, but be quick or the other boats 'll get away first.'

I made no reply, but gave a little nervous laugh of delight, and tumbled in. I did not know whether I could row one of the long, heavy oars or not, but I could take two hands to it, and I had rowed all my life in every kind of a boat, light and heavy. We took the water, and cast off the falls, and shoved clear. Then we stepped the mast and set the sail, and were off after my first whale. All the men were kind and helpful, but the Prince took me especially under his wing, and told me what my duties were in stepping the mast. When we were under sail he gave me rapid instructions as to my duties in meeting every emergency that ever arose in connection with the capture of a whale. I could not remember a quarter of them. It was all I could do to understand them.

Fortunately I did not have to remember. No emergency arose. We came up with our whale without much pulling, the Prince planted both his irons, and we backed off furiously. The whale stopped, astonished, Mr. Baker came up on the other side, and Starbuck got an iron fast; but not before the whale had recovered his power of motion, so that Starbuck's iron entered at the small, and not near the side fin, where he had meant to place it. Mr. Baker's boat was deluged with water by a sweep of the flukes, and the whale was under way, head out. Mr. Macy, I saw later, had struck the other whale, and was having no trouble.

Our whale had turned about to the eastward, and was

running. We had to give him line at first, and the whale line went twisting and writhing out past me like a living snake, making a scraping, hissing noise on my oar handle. I shrank away from it. Then, with another turn around the loggerhead, it straightened and tautened, and did not go so fast, but edged by me foot by foot; and the spray began to rise in a miniature cascade on each side of the bow. Then another turn around the loggerhead, and the progress of the line past me was by inches, slower and slower, and I could hear it creaking. Then it stopped, and we were fairly off on my first sleigh-ride behind a whale. The Prince had gone aft and taken the steering oar, and Mr. Brown had come forward.

The boats were going at a rate which seemed terrific, nine or ten knots. Our boat rolled viciously in the cross-sea, and veered and bucked. I could see the Prince putting all his strength and weight on the long steering oar, first one way and then the other, to meet her as she yawed, and keep her on a straight course. The cascades of spray rose from her keel now, about a foot or two aft of the stem, higher than the gunwale; and the northerly wind caught one of them, and blew it inboard. I was drenched with it, and so was the man aft of me. We seemed to leap from sea to sea. When I gathered courage enough to look at Mr. Baker's boat, I saw that that was a mistaken impression; but I felt as if I were on a shingle swung skittering along the top of the waves at the end of a pole.

Mr. Brown ordered us to heave in on the line. We strained our backs to the last muscle, but could only gain a fraction of an inch. Mr. Baker's crew could do

no better, and there was nothing for it but to hang on and wait for the whale to tire and slacken speed. I looked back — I continued to look back — and saw the Clearchus already hull down. I could see no sign of Mr. Macy. I watched the ship until she sank to her tops, then farther; then I could no longer make her out at all. And still that whale kept up his furious gait, head out, as though he were bound to take us to the Cape of Good Hope or to the Carroll grounds at least.

We must have been going on in that way for an hour and a half or more before the whale showed any sign of weariness. It needed a man of more experience than I had to tell the symptoms, or to perceive that our speed was slackening. Mr. Baker's boat was just about abeam of ours, and a couple of oars' lengths away. He had dropped back a boat's length or so to avoid fouling us, but the two boats were within easy speaking distance, and Mr. Baker and Mr. Brown looked at each other, and spoke at the same instant.

'Heave?'

Then they both nodded, and we got the order. We heaved, and gained a couple of inches; heaved again, and six inches of line came in. Mr. Brown was not a yelling mate. He spoke only loud enough for us to hear.

Mr. Baker was an accomplished swearer, a linguist of parts. I did not know there was such a variety of oaths in the language until I heard him swearing at his crew, urging them to heave, and calling them more vile names than you would think any men would be willing to hear quietly. Swearing was very general on the Clearchus, and none of Mr. Baker's language was to be taken seriously, which, of course, the men knew.

With all Mr. Baker's flow of language, his crew did not gain an inch more than we did; but the heaving must have had its effect on the whale. There was still a good deal of line out, perhaps fifteen or twenty fathoms, when he seemed to stop suddenly. There was a general cry of 'Flukes!' and his flukes went into the air, and he sounded.

When Starbuck had struck, as I have said, he was a trifle late. He succeeded in getting one iron fast — in the small — but had to heave the other overboard. This second harpoon had been skittering over the waves ever since, here and there, according to its whim. It had not touched our line, although Mr. Brown had been afraid that it would; and it might easily have touched our line, for a whale swims low in the water, and there is seldom any part of him continually visible aft of his hump, so that there is nothing in the way. But the harpoon had touched Mr. Baker's line several times — a good many times; each touch lasting but an instant, like the bite of a shark. A harpoon is even sharper than a shark's tooth, and each touch had severed some of the tough strands. It was a wonder that the line had survived the heaving. It must have only just survived. When the whale sounded, Mr. Baker did not give him line, but was holding until the last second. This may have been the proverbial last straw, or it may have been simply that the time had come for the line to part. At any rate, it parted. Mr. Baker cursed fluently in a really heartfelt way, and the line was rapidly hauled in. The last fathom of it was a mere feather of manila.

This left us alone fast to the whale. He did not go deep, however, and Mr. Baker was waiting, near us, for

him to come up, which he did in about five minutes a few feet ahead of Mr. Baker's boat. He came up almost vertically, his head and body shooting out of the water, and exposing his side fin. Then he fell over with a tremendous splash; but Mr. Baker had shot his lance into him, and quickly withdrawn it. The shank was bent, but Mr. Baker straightened it by knocking it on the gunwale, and let him have it again.

Meanwhile we had been taking in our slack line as fast as we could, and when it tautened, heaving in on it to bring us up close enough for Mr. Brown to use his lance. We had not been able to keep the slack ahead of the whale, with all our haste, and he had got a turn around his flukes, like a half hitch, so that we could not shake it loose. It was impossible for us to haul in ahead of his flukes, and lancing them would be no more than an annoyance to the whale, like a mosquito bite. If he should take it into his head to slap that mosquito, it might prove more than an annoyance for us. There was nothing to be done but to slack off the line and try to row up to his side fin, where Mr. Brown wanted to be. We could not have hoped to do this if the whale's attention had not been taken up with Mr. Baker's boat. He seemed to attribute all his troubles to that boat, and was putting up a half-hearted sort of a fight; but even a half-hearted fight by a fairly husky whale is not to be taken lightly. Mr. Baker was having his hands full.

We pulled up to within a boat's length, lay there for a few minutes watching for an opening; then, putting all our strength into our oars, we drove the boat in close to the side fin. Mr. Brown plunged the lance in deep, and

began churning it slowly up and down, feeling for the heart or the great reservoir of arterial blood near it. The whale had lobtailed once upon feeling the lance, without doing any damage; but in a few strokes Mr. Brown's lance had found the life. A tremor passed through the great body, a spout rose slowly from his spiracle black with clotted blood, he bestirred himself, and we backed off hastily. He was going into his flurry.

That flurry was not an elevating spectacle, but we all watched it. I was fascinated, and so the others seemed to be, all in Mr. Baker's boat as well as in ours. Our attention for a long time had been so entirely taken up by the whale that not a man of the twelve — counting myself as a man — had looked about him, or been aware of anything but the whale and the two boats, and what was happening there. Suddenly Mr. Baker broke out in a perfect stream of curses. Mr. Brown smiled.

'Look!' he said. 'Like a bad penny.'

We all looked. There was the Annie Battles, not a mile away, bearing down directly upon us. Not one of us said a word, but two or three were grinning. It was beginning to seem funny.

Mr. Baker did not seem to think it funny. He had stopped his flow of profanity, whether because he had exhausted his stock, or because his choicest gems were inadequate, I could not guess; and now, standing in his place in the bow like a gaunt statue of a man, silent and motionless, he watched the Battles grow rapidly, and the foam under her forefoot, and the men upon her deck. He held his lance loosely in his hand, the shank resting on the gunwale. If she had shown any sign of changing her course, I knew that he would have ordered

his crew to pull hard for her, in the hope of boarding her before she got away. She did not; and there is no sense in hard pulling to meet a vessel which is coming to meet you as straight and as fast as she can. And, although Mr. Baker was holding his lance loosely, I knew that his great fist would grip it hard at the slightest provocation.

At last the Battles put her helm down, slacked off her sheets, backed one topsail, and hung there, almost near enough for us to heave a line aboard of her. No one on her hailed us, but some of her men were standing at the rail like wooden images, watching us, while others were going lazily aloft. By this time our whale had spouted his last spout, and lay quiet in the sea, with our irons still in him and our line fast to them. Mr. Baker's men had their oars in the water, and his boat seemed to be drifting toward the Battles. I saw Mr. Wallet and another standing by the man at the wheel. I could see even his feeble smile and his pale blue eyes and his tight curling hair, almost like a negro's but for the color. Mr. Wallet's was sandy, with a reddish tinge, like brown sandstone; some of our men had called his hair his brownstone front. When he saw Mr. Baker's boat drifting toward them, he moved uneasily, his smile faded, and he spoke to the man standing with him. He knew Mr. Baker of old.

Mr. Baker did not wait to get there. 'If you try to steal *this* whale,' he shouted, 'why, damn your souls, there'll be blood spilled.'

The man to whom Mr. Wallet had spoken was leaning on the rail. He laughed. 'There's been blood spilled already, ain't there? Seems to me I see it on your lance.'

'That's good clean blood of a whale!' retorted Mr. Baker. 'There's other blood waiting that ain't so clean. I'd hate to dirty a good lance with it.'

'Cheap talk!' said the other contemptuously. 'We don't steal whales.'

The boat was now within an oar's length of the side of the Battles.

'I'm coming aboard,' said Mr. Baker, 'to see Cap'n Coffin about it — and about another matter.'

'You can't see Cap'n Coffin,' replied the other, who seemed to be one of the mates, and in command of the vessel at the moment, 'and you don't come aboard of us. Sheer off there!'

A number of the men at the rail of the Battles showed themselves to have spades in their hands. They put the spades over the side, and held them suspended there.

'Keep off!' said the mate of the Battles. 'We'll smash it!'

For Mr. Baker had taken the boathook, and had hooked on to their chains. He was drawing the boat up close, when a spade smashed down on the boathook just back of the iron, and cut it off clean.

Perhaps it was too serious a matter for mere cursing. At any rate, Mr. Baker said nothing at all for some seconds, to our great surprise.

'Very well,' he said then, quietly, 'if you'd rather have it that way, so be it. I'll report it — fully. Now I make demand upon you for Alonzo Wallet, formerly second mate of the Clearchus, a deserter from his ship.' The mate of the Battles smiled, and beckoned Mr. Wallet. He came, with his weak smile again upon his face.

'What's wanted of me?' he asked.

'Cap'n Nelson wants you,' Mr. Baker replied, 'strange as it may seem; for you're the most good-for-nothing officer that ever I shipped with.'

With those spades between him and Mr. Baker, Wallet's courage had revived, but he no longer smiled. He leaned over the rail as far as he could, and shook a feeble finger at Mr. Baker.

'Tell the old man to go to hell,' he said; 'and go to hell yourself, will you, Jehoram? You're bound there now if you don't look sharp.'

He pointed to the southwest. The sun had disappeared behind a heavy mass of black cloud, in which there appeared, as we looked at it, the glare of lightning. I had thought that it seemed early for it to be getting dark, but it had not occurred to me to look. The mass of clouds was but just above our horizon. A few men in the two boats had observed it. Mr. Brown and Mr. Baker had seen it for fifteen or twenty minutes past. It may have accounted for Mr. Baker's readiness to cut short his controversy with the Battles.

'I've known about that for some time, Wallet,' said Mr. Baker; 'and let me tell you that you're in much more danger of going to hell in the next hour than I am. A whaleboat's the safest thing that rides the sea. Maybe you didn't know it. And you'd better shorten sail some more,' he added, 'if you hope to ride it out.'

For the only answer to this the mate — if he was the mate — and Mr. Wallet both turned and looked up at the sails. The men who had gone aloft had been engaged in reefing the topsails in a very leisurely manner. Now they had to put in another reef in response to orders

yelled by the mate, and they worked faster. Mr. Baker came back to the whale, and the Battles slowly drifted to the southward, taking in her great mainsail and her foresail and two of her jibs, leaving her under staysail and double-reefed topsails. By the time that was done, she had got well away from us, and the black cloud covered half the heavens. Mr. Baker had rowed up to the whale, and had deliberately planted another iron deep in the small, near his first one. I asked no questions, but Mr. Brown must have read them in my face.

'Getting ready to ride it out, Tim,' he said, smiling kindly. We had nothing to do, having fifteen or twenty fathoms of line out, and he was leaning against the cleat, watching. 'A whale's a ready made sea-anchor, if he only stays afloat; and I guess he will. And we shall be in his lee, where the seas won't be quite so high — although there's not much of the carcass showing.'

I turned and looked at the whale doubtfully.

'I should think, sir,' I ventured, 'that Mr. Baker might foul us, or we him, if he has about the same length of line that we have.'

'No,' Mr. Brown replied, smiling again. 'A drifting body always drifts broadside to the wind — to the resistance. I could prove that to you by mathematics if we had the chance, and if I hadn't forgotten the proof. But experience proves the proof to be correct, which is much more convincing than mere mathematics. You notice.'

I nodded. 'Yes, sir, I will, if —'

Mr. Brown laughed. 'If we get out of this, eh? We shall. Make your mind easy.'

The carcass of the whale was lying nearly east and

west under the northerly wind. As the squall — pampero or whatever it was — advanced, the wind dropped, until we were heaving on an oily swell in a flat calm. The men in Mr. Baker's boat took that chance of backing water, and of working the body of the whale slowly around until it lay very nearly north and south, while the squall was coming from the southwest. Then there was nothing to do but to watch the clouds, and to wait for the wind to strike.

The edge of the cloud seemed to be directly over us, writhing and twisting, and it was almost as dark as night.

'There she comes,' said Mr. Brown quietly; and I saw what seemed a blank wall of mist, with the black cloud above. We could see it some miles away, and it was coming fast.

'Fog, sir?' I asked, puzzled.

'Rain, and hail, probably, and wind,' said Mr. Brown.

As it came on I could see the line of rain and hail, as sharp as the cut side of a cheese; and there was a queer foaming commotion in the water at the foot of the advancing wall. It had got almost to the carcass of the whale before we felt the first cold puffs of air. Those first cold puffs were from every direction, some straight up; and the foaming commotion in the water resolved itself into an infinite series of small geysers, from one to two feet high, like columns of water sent up by explosions of shells, such as I have seen many times in the last few years when the Fort has been at target practice. At a distance of six or seven miles, even through a powerful glass, they look no higher than these did.

The edge of the wall reached the carcass, and there

was a curious effect of bombardment with small white rubber balls — I should have thought at once of tennis balls if I had then ever seen a tennis ball — the balls bounding high from the elastic surface of the carcass. I knew it then for hail. The wall was past the whale, and completely hid it from sight, less than a hundred feet off, and the wind struck us like a blow from a chunk of ice. Then the hail struck us, hail mixed with rain.

We hardly knew what to do to protect our heads. It was like being pelted with rocks — rocks which there was no escaping. They were everywhere. I instinctively put up my hands over my head, and had to take them down again, for the bones of my hands were being bruised, and I was really afraid they might be broken. None of us had a stiff hat, but all wore soft hats or caps or were bareheaded. I did not mind the wind — I was not conscious of it — and I did not see what the others did; but I found myself crawling in the bottom of the boat, partly under a thwart, and pulling out a corner of the sail to protect my head. When I had time to think of anything but the safety of my own head, I saw that the others had done the same thing.

I looked out from my protecting canvas, and saw the water absolutely filled with those miniature geysers. The hail had beaten down the sea, in spite of the furious wind, until the surface was almost as smooth as a pond, with the rollers running under it as if the water were covered with silk. After a while — perhaps half an hour, perhaps a quarter — the hail stopped, and left only the rain and the wind, and the rapidly growing seas. We were sitting in a deep slush of water and hailstones, and the hailstones weighed heavily on my legs.

They were beautiful, round, white stones, many as large as robins' eggs, but most of them the size of marbles. The boat was deep with them, and rolled sluggishly. We had to get them out at once, which we did with a couple of buckets, our hats and our hands, shoveling them over the side.

I have never in my life known it to blow harder than it did in the next few hours. We rode it out, safe in the lee of our sea anchor, drenched to the skin, all of us, and very cold. Although the sea rose very quickly as soon as the hail stopped, and ran very high, the carcass of the whale seemed to smooth the seas out, and none broke around us; but the boats stood almost on end. My heart was in my mouth most of the time, but I do not think my apprehensions were evident to the others. Heaven knows I tried hard enough, for I was even more afraid of showing fear than I was of the wind and the sea.

Night fell while it was blowing viciously and raining. In a few hours the rain stopped, but the wind did not. It seemed to blow harder, and it gradually shifted to the southeast; and after a while the stars came out. I do not know how long it was, for I had lost all sense of time. I had got over the worst of my scare, and I was too tired to think. I crouched down in the boat, and I fell asleep, soaked and cold as I was.

It was gray dawn when I awoke, stiff and cramped. I saw Mr. Brown in his place, gazing out at the eastern sky. He had been awake all night, ready to cut if the carcass of the whale showed signs of sinking; but it was still afloat, and no lower in the water than it had been the night before. Mr. Baker's boat was so near that we could almost have touched oars.

There was no sign of the Battles or of the Clearchus — nothing within our horizon but the wide ocean, deep indigo in the distance, with great seas rolling and tumbling, dark green near the boat, their tops a ghastly white. After an hour or two my heart began to sink. How could it be expected that anybody would find us, a speck in that vast and dreary expanse of ocean? Mr. Brown seemed confident enough, but my heart had sunk down into my soaked boots when, in the middle of the forenoon, he spoke to me. No doubt he guessed my feelings. They may have been evident enough.

'See there, Tim; almost abeam of us.'

We were streaming out to the northwest behind the whale. I looked, but I could see nothing but the tops of distant seas rising and falling. I shook my head.

'Can't you make it out? Three stubby topmasts, almost in line, and the to'gallan'yards? If you knew them as well as I do —'

'The Clearchus?'

He nodded. 'I think so. I'm pretty sure.'

He was right, as he was apt to be. Mr. Baker had seen it too. The Clearchus picked us up before noon, got the whale alongside, and began to cut-in at once, rough and blowing as it was. She had been caught by the blow with Mr. Macy's whale alongside. They saw the blow coming, and tried to save the case, but they did not succeed, and the whale broke adrift, taking some of our tackle with it. They had to cut and run for it. We never saw that whale again.

It moderated toward the middle of the afternoon, and by the time we were ready to try out, we had a clear sky and a gentle breeze.

CHAPTER XVIII

We had the usual variations in weather, some good, some bad, but none very bad, to the Carroll grounds. For two thirds of the way the wind was mostly pretty strong from the west or southwest, giving the Clearchus what she liked best; for the last third of the way it drew in from the southeast, although we were not at any time in the region of the steady southeast trades, merely touching upon the border of that region toward the very last of the run. We ran into no gales, and made a passage of about five weeks, arriving on the Carroll grounds the last week in March. We then shortened sail, and began to cruise. It was the captain's intention to quarter the ground thoroughly once, making slowly to the southeast, which was the windward side, and then to beat up for the Cape.

For a week we beat back and forth in fine weather without a sign of a whale. I had almost ceased to think of them, and spent my spare time in surreptitious games with Peter or with the group of men who were usually gathered about him; or I stood by the windlass or sat between the knightheads — anywhere where I could not be spied from aft — and looked out ahead over the white-capped seas, feeling the brisk wind on my cheeks, and listening to the noise of the water under the bows, and to the gentle creaking of the spars and rigging. To me those are inexpressibly soothing sounds; they have always been so, and are to this day. The noises of the

life of the ship — not very loud at their worst, in such a case — are far behind you, and they come faintly to your ears, as if from another world. They do not seem real, as do the bubbling of the water under the bow, and the wash of it as it passes astern, and the faint noise of breaking seas, and the soft sound of the wind on the sails.

That pleasant mode of life was not to last forever. One afternoon I was lying on my back on the heel of the bowsprit. I had just finished my chores after dinner, and had lain down to gaze up at the sails, full and straining, and at the sky above them. My gaze travelled up the foremast, past the topsails, which were braced well around, for we were sailing with the wind forward of the beam. The fore truck described slow ellipses against the sky, and I was fascinated in watching them. Now and then I caught a glimpse, past the bellying topsail, of the masthead man. He seemed very far up. He was leaning wearily against the hoops, as if he might have been asleep. Suddenly he straightened alertly. I knew what to expect then, and I sat up as the cry floated down to me; then I jumped to my feet, and ran to Mr. Brown's boat.

There were two spouts, about three miles to leeward, and the whales seemed to be travelling at about the same rate as the ship, and pretty near together. The spouts rose as regularly as the exhaust of a tugboat, although nowhere near as fast; there were ten or twelve seconds between them. The ship was laid around on a course nearly parallel with that of the whales, and we waited to see if they would not go down to feed. There was no sign of their doing so, however, and after waiting over

twenty minutes, we lowered three boats. Our boat — that means Mr. Brown's — was one of the three. I took my place in it without asking leave, but as Mr. Brown looked right at me, and made no objection, and as the Prince even smiled at me, I thought it was probably what was expected.

By hard pulling we got right in the course of the whales, Mr. Baker and ourselves taking the farther one, and Mr. Macy the nearer. Our whale was a little in advance of the other. Then we waited, our oars in our hands, to be ready for any change of course of the whales. Approaching a whale head on is one of the favorite ways, for a whale cannot see anything directly ahead of him, strange and inconvenient as that may seem. The whales came on in a business-like way, rising to spout, then pitching under, until they were perhaps within fifty or sixty feet of the boats. The Prince was all set to strike, and the four oarsmen gripping their oars hard, I, at least, with my nerves on edge. Then the whales brought up suddenly; stopped as completely as if they had run into a wall. Something had excited their suspicion, although the men in the boats were as still as death. Our whale — I should not have called him ours so soon — raised his head from the water, as if listening, and Mr. Baker and Mr. Brown signalled the men to pull up. It was only a little way, and the two boats almost leaped from the water. I could see nothing of the whale, pulling, as I was, with my back to him, and my eyes glued to the oar of the man in front of me, but I could imagine that whale pricking up his ears, if he had had any. Mr. Baker's boat was just abeam of us, to take him on his other side. Out of the corner of my eye I saw the

men in her laying to it, and the spray flying from her bow.

It is utterly useless to dart the harpoon at the front of a sperm whale. The weapon almost always bounds back as if it were a mass of rubber it had struck against. We had to get as far as his eye before a chance would be offered. I saw his great cliff-like head shoot by. Then, as we came within range of his vision, within ten feet of him, he suddenly sank away from the boat and out of sight like a lump of lead, without a motion of his fins, or his flukes either, so far as I could judge by hearing. The Prince had darted, and so had Starbuck — and had missed by inches, at ten feet. It was comical to see the consternation and amazement of Starbuck, and I have no doubt the Prince's surprise was nearly as great, although he would not show it so plainly. I did hear a grunt from him, however, and an exclamation. The harpoons had clashed under water. When they were hauled in, the Prince found the shank of his bent, and a gouge, fresh and bright, deep in the shank at the point of bending; and the edge of Starbuck's was dulled and turned.

Mr. Macy's boat, with George Hall the boatsteerer, had an exactly similar experience. Mr. Macy had not headed that boat long enough to overcome entirely the effect of Wallet's slackness and generally slipshod way of doing things, and his crew did not respond quite so quickly or so well. Consequently his whale had just enough warning to begin to move, but not enough time to get under way, or to find out definitely what was up. His only escape was to sink from the head of the boat as quickly as a marlinspike that has been dropped over-

board, or an anchor. Hall, however, had no chance to dart, and he had had experience enough to know it. We did not see those whales again except at a distance which was perfectly safe, and then they were swimming head out, making ten or twelve knots.

CHAPTER XIX

The day before we got into Cape Town I wrote a short letter home, and enclosed my journal. We came to in Table Bay the next morning, with the mass of Table Mountain looming to the eastward, and Devil's Peak and the Lion's Head and Signal Hill enclosing the town. The crew had liberty ashore, in relays, and the first boatload of liberty men were off within an hour. I do not know how the men spent their precious liberty.

We laid in a stock of fresh provisions, and got off our mail, and found some mail for the ship, but there was nothing for me. The captain attended to some other business, but I do not know what. He did not ship a man to take the vacant place, and we had two vacant places when we left in the afternoon of the second day, for a green hand, a Portuguese named Silvia from Mr. Macy's boat, turned up missing. Mr. Tilton made a brief search for him, but did not find him, and we could not wait. Most of the other men were rounded up drunk, or just recovering from that happy state, and really not responsible.

Mr. Snow, our fourth mate since the promotions after Mr. Wallet's defection, a nervous, irascible little man, became very much enraged at one of the men from his own boat. The man's name was Silver — perhaps unfortunately resembling Silvia, the name of the man who was missing. He was a green hand too, if a man is still green after eight months at sea. Mr. Snow addressed a sarcastic remark to Silver — or Silva — bearing upon that

resemblance of names, and Silver, as might have been expected, answered him in a surly manner, calling him a fussy little busybody, or less agreeable words to the same effect. Of course it was no fault of Silver's that his name was like Silvia's, or that Silvia was not to be found, but he would not have answered Mr. Snow as he did if he had been feeling like himself, or if he had been to sea long enough to know the unwisdon of it.

Mr. Snow hesitated and sputtered and got red in the face, but said nothing after all, and fumed off aft. The rest of the men rather expected that Silver might be put in irons, but nothing came of the matter then, except that Silver had the permanent ill-will of his boatheader. That is not a state of affairs generally cultivated.

We stood around the Cape, keeping well out to sea to avoid the current which sets to the southwest and west along the shore of the African continent and for about a hundred and fifty miles from it, more or less. The surface currents all through the Indian Ocean are strong and tricky. Off Durban or Port Natal the current runs southwesterly at very nearly three or four knots at this season, and it was worth while not to get into it, especially for a ship like the Clearchus, which could not be depended upon to sail faster than five or six knots. By keeping a couple of hundred miles to the southward we got into the easterly drift and the west wind, and we held that course to about 35° east longitude, gradually turning to the north for the Mozambique Channel.

The mastheads were kept manned all this time, but it was hardly expected that we would sight any whales, and I suspect that there was little desire to see any. The wind held generally strong from the westward until we

were on our way north. We sighted the southwest coast of Madagascar, but it got no nearer than a low-lying purple line, and we swung away to the northwest until we sunk it.

Madagascar is nearly a thousand miles long, and from three to five hundred miles from the coast of Africa, the narrowest part of the Mozambique Channel, opposite Mozambique, being about two hundred and sixty miles broad. We were therefore well out of sight of land almost all the time that we cruised in those waters. Although the wind was southerly — the southeast trades — and by all the rules we should have run directly through the Channel and beat slowly back again, we did not do so, but steered a zigzag course, wearing ship as we approached either side of the Channel. The captain was so certain of seeing whales there that he did not want to miss the first chance, and that chance was as likely to come one way as another.

The chance came when we had been in the Channel four days and were on the second leg of our zigzag. I was busy in the cabin, but I heard the faint musical cry, 'Ah — bl-o-ows!' I dropped everything, and ran on deck. It was early, breakfast being just over. There they were to the east of us, three beautiful plumes rising together, shining in the sun, drifting for a moment, and dissolving gradually into nothing. We manœuvred for position — if it is proper to speak of anything as clumsy as the Clearchus as manœuvring — and waited for the whales to sound. They took their time about it, at which I did not wonder. It was very pleasant at the surface in the sun, and they lay lazily at their length, spouting now and then. We got to windward of them,

and as near as the captain thought was safe — a gallied whale is hard to get. Still they did not go down, and we lowered four boats; all but Mr. Macy's. The boats were put into water carefully, so as not to make a splash that the whales would hear, they cast off in silence, and the men took to their paddles. I counted as a man, for I was at what was getting to be my usual place in Mr. Brown's boat.

We were next to Mr. Snow in the circle in which the boats were spreading, and a little ahead of him. I did not look at Mr. Snow, for my eyes were otherwise occupied. I was aware of him, however, and knew that he was alternately looking briefly at the whales and glaring malevolently at the back of Silver, who rowed tub oar. Silver, although he wielded his paddle industriously, was aware of it too, and it made him nervous, so that he became awkward. Mr. Snow had put in his time since leaving Cape Town largely in gazing malevolently at Silver. He was a little thunder-cloud, threatening always, but doing no damage, except to haze Silver — haze meaning to punish by hard work, unnecessary usually, and as hard as possible — whenever he had the chance. This attitude had resulted in his becoming overbearing to the rest of his crew, and he was fast getting to be the most unpopular officer on the ship. Silver was not a little frightened, for he did not know what he might have said or done to Mr. Snow. He had been in a condition of irresponsibility at the time, and he could not remember. I had overheard him asking one man after another what it was, but they were in no better case for remembering, and could give him no comfort.

Silver now became so awkward with his paddle that he missed the water altogether — caught a crab — and fell forward on his knees, striking the oars and making a tremendous rattling and rumbling. We were not far from the whales, and no respectable whale could avoid hearing that noise of wood on wood, like beating a great tom-tom. They cocked up their ears for an instant, but the oars were still rolling about, Silver frantically grabbing at them, and the whales simultaneously raised their flukes high, and went down. Mr. Baker, on the other side of Mr. Snow, launched a string of curses at Mr. Snow's boat for his carelessness, for he had been on the point of signalling Starbuck to stand up, he was so near his whale. Mr. Snow, in turn, cursed Silver up and down. It was rather startling to hear such a flow of language from such a man. Mr. Snow, just to see him in his usual state, made you think of a Sunday-School teacher.

Mr. Brown looked up wearily. I knew him well enough to be sure that he was thinking that cursing would not get them anywhere. Mr. Snow appeared to be of the same opinion, for he stopped his cursing abruptly. We lay on our oars, which we had taken as soon as Silver caught his crab, and waited for the whales.

We were near the middle of the arc, which was not very wide, not above an eighth of a mile for the four boats, for the whales had been bunched. We lay still, but the outer boats pulled hard to make the arc wider. In about twenty minutes the whales came up, just beyond the outermost boat to the westward. That happened to be Mr. Tilton's. Then came our own, then

Mr. Snow's, and Mr. Baker on the eastward end. Mr. Tilton was an experienced whaleman, and he felt sure enough that we should not get any of those whales, for he saw that they were gallied just enough to be very wary, and not to lose track of the boats for a second. There was a chance, however, and he took it, as he was in duty bound to do. He could not get near enough to dart, and the whales went under again, not deep, but swimming under water. They came up at the opposite end of the line, and Mr. Baker thought that he had a chance, but he did not have any better success than Mr. Tilton. Then the whales rose again between us and Mr. Snow. We pulled hard for them, but they easily got through to windward, lay there and waited for us.

Those three whales seemed to enjoy the sport. They had us where they wanted us, to leeward of them, and they gave us the hardest kind of work for four hours. We were in the region of the southeast trades, which drew in from the southward, and there was a combing sea, hard to pull against. We all knew that the whales had all the best of it, but they would bring to just out of reach, tantalizing us, egging us on with the thought that this time we had them; but before any boat had got near enough to dart, they would up flukes or settle out of reach, only to come up again just near enough to tempt us afresh. I have no doubt it was fun for the whales, but it was no fun for the men. My muscles and my hands were sore and aching when we were signalled from the ship to give it up and come aboard. Mr. Baker did not want to give it up even then. He was fighting mad — it did not take very much to make Mr. Baker fighting mad, and the thought that three common,

ordinary whales could have fun with him was almost too much. I think that he would have liked to make mincemeat of them. Fortunately, the ship was well to leeward, and we sailed back. Those three whales followed us back almost to the ship. They seemed to feel hurt because we would not play any longer. I had, and I still have, a great admiration for those whales. There was no malice in them, and they had only been indulging in a game of tag. I was glad to think that we had left them unhurt in their element, instead of drifting carcasses to be stripped bare by birds and sharks.

On our beat south through the Channel, we had better luck. We had many unsuccessful chases, but we got three whales ranging from sixty to seventy barrels each. There was no excitement in it; about as much as there would have been in slaughtering three mild-eyed cows. That was just what it was, simple slaughter. But we had our excitement before we got out of the Channel.

It was as we were getting to the southern mouth of the Channel. I remember that we were not far from Bazaruta Island, for Peter had just been pointing out to me the place where it was. He said that he could see it, but I could not. He looked away for a moment, and was giving me some further information, when he saw the spout. At the instant the cry came down from the masthead. It was a lone spout, the spout of a lone whale, so far as we could see.

We lowered two boats for him, Mr. Brown's and Mr. Macy's. Largely by good luck Mr. Macy got to the whale first, and Hall sunk his two irons in him. It was a good strike, and the irons were sunk to the hafts. The whale showed ugly right away. He went down a little,

and ran under water, taking out nearly two tubs of line. They had just managed to snub the line somewhat, and were beginning their ride after him, with the line still smoking around the loggerhead, when suddenly he stopped, turned quickly, and came back at them. He came at full speed, head out, his jaw hanging down at nearly a right angle, meaning mischief with it. Mr. Macy saw it, of course, and so did Hall. Hall tried to lay the boat around with the steering oar, out of the course of the whale, but the great length of line hanging over the bow was almost like an anchor. The men were heaving it in as fast as they could. Macy ordered them to their oars, and with oars and steering oar together Hall just managed to get them partly out of the way of the whale. He turned half over, and struck the boat a glancing blow with his jaw, however, stove a couple of planks, and rolled her over. We saw her rise — she did not really leave the water — and come down bottom side up. While she was coming down we heard the crash of the splintering planks.

Most of the men had jumped out just before the whale struck them, and one or two had been thrown out, but we could not be sure, from where we were, whether all were accounted for or not. We pulled hard for them, and when we had come up Mr. Brown counted heads.

'Where's Macy?' he asked sharply.

Before anybody could answer Mr. Macy's head popped up, beside the overturned boat. The boat had come down over him, and he had dived out. The men were grabbing oars and pieces of plank — anything that would keep them afloat — and were swimming

away from the wreck as fast as they could. Mr. Brown saw that they all had something to hang on to, and that another boat had been lowered from the ship, and was coming up fast.

'You're all right,' he said. 'Hold on, and I'll try to coax him away.'

Macy laughed. 'You're welcome to it,' he said.

The whale had been lying a short distance away, thrashing his flukes about truculently, and moving from side to side. In the course of his movements he caught sight of the wrecked boat, and it seemed to excite his rage afresh. He at once came down for it, his jaw down, and struck at it with his jaw; but he did but little damage, only smashing another plank, as the boat rolled away. The men were swimming away as fast as they could. The whale came to a short distance from the wreck, turned, and again came down viciously.

He had not seen our boat, although it was in plain sight; at any rate, he had taken no notice of it. Perhaps his mind was so occupied with the immediate object of his wrath that it had no room for anything else. Before he reached the wrecked boat, we struck, the Prince darting both irons, one after the other, with great rapidity, and with all his strength. They almost disappeared in his body, just behind his side fin. This distracted his attention from the wreck completely. He was clearly astonished, and striking the water two tremendous blows with his flukes, and drenching everybody in the boat, he put away to windward at a great pace.

He went so fast, and made so much play with his flukes, that we could not haul alongside. He seemed to be rolling a little as he swam, and the play of the flukes

covered the course the boat would have to take. There was nothing to do but the best we could. We hauled up with great difficulty just astern of the great flukes, and Mr. Brown tried pitch-poling the boat spade into his small, to cut the fluke tendons. This was a difficult matter, in a rolling, jumping boat, and in three trials Mr. Brown succeeded only in wounding the flukes, which served to increase the speed. We simply had to haul up close, and we did it somehow, the Prince keeping us clear of the flukes by great exertion at the steering oar. I do not see how he did it, and I did not see at the time, for my back was toward him, and I was putting my whole heart into heaving, to gain a few inches at a time. I very nearly put the flesh of my hands into it, too. By the time the flukes were astern of us, I felt as if all my fingers had been stripped to the bone; as if they were in the same condition they were in the day Jimmy and I got John Appleby's boat aground on Fort Phœnix shoal.

The line now broke the pin in the chocks, I suppose at a leap of the boat and a heave on the steering oar, and jumped out of the chocks. It brought up on the kicking-strap, pulling over the port bow at a slight angle with the boat, which kept clear automatically. A few inches of clear water showed between the boat and the body of the running whale, whose speed had not slackened in the least. I remember that the wave from the boat and that from the whale, meeting at such close quarters, resulted in a nearly vertical sheet of water, which came steadily over the side, making a nearly continuous cataract down my back until I moved over.

Mr. Brown looked around apprehensively; but seeing

LANCING A WHALE

that the boat was all right, and that the arrangement would give him an excellent chance to lance, he ordered Kane to take the line and heave a little. That would put him where he wanted to be. Kane, the bow oar, took the line all right, but was unable to heave us any farther forward, and I took hold. Together, we heaved the boat up before any of the others could get hold. Once there, my only idea was to hold us there, close to that whale. Before the Prince had a chance to take in the slack of the line and hold around the loggerhead, out of the depths of my ignorance and thoughtlessness, I did it. I might have known better if I had stopped to think, but I might not, and there was no time to stop and think. I took a couple of turns with the slack around the thwart, and pulled the bight of the line through. It was a slip-knot, and could be released by a yank upon the line held in my hand.

We were now holding our position close to the irons — naturally enough — and Mr. Brown seemed to be pleased. He was unaware of my device. He lanced the whale again and again, but was unable to reach the life. The whale was spouting thin blood, but did not seem to be much distressed; not as much as we were, for the boat was taking over the side a plentiful spray, and the bloody vapor of his spout enveloped us. It was like an acid.

Suddenly he turned — so quickly that the boat ran plump into him, and a little way upon his body, so close to the irons that I could have reached them by leaning out a little. Mr. Brown seized his opportunity, and drove his lance twice into the life.

'Slack your line, quick,' he said, 'and stern all!'

Then he looked around, and saw my knot, of which I had been so proud. I was yanking desperately at the line to release the knot, but it would not come. I was not strong enough, it seemed.

Mr. Brown's face expressed the most utter disgust. He said nothing, but seized the hatchet to cut.

It was not necessary, for Kane had seen my trouble, had sprung and grabbed the line with me. We yanked together, and the knot came loose with a noise like an explosion. Never in my life have I felt more relief than I felt at that sound. We backed off instantly, and the flukes came down on the water, just missing the boat. I did not mind it, and was really not aware of it. I did not mind anything now that that confounded knot was loose.

The whale was going into his flurry, but we got well clear of him. In ten or fifteen minutes more he lay fin out. The ship was hull down to leeward.

That evening, after we had towed the whale to the ship, and had made it fast alongside, Mr. Brown found me and gave me a serious overhauling. It was not long, and it was kindly, but I never forgot it. The gist of it was that a whale line should NEVER *be made fast.*

CHAPTER XX

When we had the trying-out finished — the whale made about sixty-three barrels — we were not far from Bazaruta Island, and the captain thought it a good chance to lay in some wood. Two boats were sent ashore, the men taking axes, while the Clearchus lay near, and the rest of the crew were busy with their cleaning and scrubbing. I was sent ashore with the boats. The island, or at any rate the part of it which we saw, was uninhabited, and was covered with a dense jungle of woods and vines and creepers. There was an abundance of wood, but it was rather hard to get, and we were there for two days, the boats taking off the wood as fast as we got it cut. The second day I got lost in the jungle, and I might be there yet if it had not been for Peter.

There were a good many snakes in the jungle, the cobra among them. I did not know much about snakes, did not recognize the cobra, and did not appreciate its quality. I had become separated from the others in my pursuit of trees which I could tackle alone, and which would be of any value as fuel. When at last I looked up, I realized that I was lost. I had stepped so thoroughly around the tree that my trail in had become obliterated, and I could not tell which way to go. I tried several ways, but they all ended in a tangle of vegetation, and I began to get really scared, but I did not like to yell. I stopped and looked about me, and I saw a snake crawling sluggishly away.

My only experience with snakes had been with these

little green or mottled-brown grass snakes, about two feet long or less, or with adders, and a couple of big blacksnakes. The blacksnakes I let alone, but I was accustomed to catch the grass snakes and treat them as pets. I had a box in our back yard, covered with wire netting, in which I put them, and kept them until my mother made too strenuous objection to the practice. Then, although I could not understand why she should object so strongly, I bowed to the inevitable. They were pretty things, and quite harmless; even useful, but she neither knew nor cared about that. So, when I saw that snake in the jungle, instead of letting him go peaceably, as anybody else would have done, and glad that he was going, I leaped after him. It was not so very big, perhaps three or four feet long.

The snake hurried when I jumped, but I kept on, and it stopped and faced me, rearing its head erect, some distance from the ground. Its hood puffed out, and its head waved slowly from side to side. I began to be scared then, and backed away. There was a slight movement in the vines and bushes back of the snake, they parted silently, and I saw Peter looking at me. I did not speak, but pointed at the snake. Peter did not delay. His axe fell upon the snake, and cut it cleanly in two parts.

'Come, lad,' said Peter. 'We missed you, and nobody knew which way you'd gone. They're about done.'

I remonstrated. 'But, Peter, my tree.' And I pointed at the fallen monarch of the forest, which was about six inches through at the butt, and twenty-five feet long.

Peter smiled. 'Aye, lad, I heard it fall. It was by that I found you. Maybe we'll get it, and maybe not. I

think they're ready to put off to the ship and are waiting for us.'

So I followed him, leaving my precious tree, and leaving the pieces of the snake still writhing about on the ground. According to all my lore, they would continue to writhe until sunset, which was not far off. I determined to add to my curriculum a brief course upon snakes. I felt sure that the course would meet Mr. Brown's approval, and that he was qualified to give it.

We made sail on the Clearchus, and stood for the southern end of Madagascar; rounded it, and stood northerly. There was rather a strong current against us, but the wind held strong from the east and southeast, and we made nearly four knots in spite of the current. Peter was occupied with the stove boat. He had little help, but he did not want any. There was a fascination in watching his deliberate movements, every one of which was to the certain end; the same kind of fascination which I used to feel in watching Oman, a cabinet-maker, at work. Oman seemed slow, and his manner of working would not have been approved by a modern efficiency expert, but he knew his trade from top to bottom, and was a master workman. He loved his work, as any master workman must. Not one of his deliberate movements was wasted, and the beautiful end was reached with surprising ease and quickness; and what an end it was! Peter was no cabinet-maker, but his method of working was the same.

When we had made about half the length of Madagascar without even raising a spout, we fell in with another New Bedford whaler, the Apollo, and Captain Nelson

went aboard of her for a gam with Captain Hendrickson. I did not go. They gammed from early morning to late in the afternoon, and then I saw Captain Nelson's boat coming back. The mate of the Apollo, who had been visiting us, hurried away with his men. As far as I could gather from what I overheard, the master of the Apollo had not communicated anything of value. She was a full ship, however, on her way home, and the old man — Captain Nelson — felt sure that she had found some new cruising ground, either in the Indian Ocean or in the Pacific, he thought more likely the Indian Ocean. He had spent the day in detective work, trying to find some clue to its location, but without result. Whaling captains, when they have happened upon a new field, guard the secret as carefully as they can, but it leaks out in a year or two. No doubt Captain Hendrickson was laughing at him at that moment. He said this, standing on deck, looking back at the Apollo sinking into the sea behind us. She was hull down already, enveloped in a purple haze, for the sun was near its setting. The captain stood for some time silently gazing, until the old-fashioned square topsails of the Apollo were lost in the haze. Then he turned, smiling, to go below.

'I'll find it, by Godfrey,' he muttered to himself, 'if I have to comb these seas with a fine-toothed comb.'

Captain Nelson seemed to have made up his mind that there were no more whales to be found in those waters, for he stood away to the northwest, for the northern end of Madagascar. We passed within sight of it, but did not stop.

There was a good deal of speculation among the crew as to where we were going, for although the mastheads

were kept manned, the routine of cruising grounds was abandoned, and the Clearchus was under a press of sail for a whaler. The men insisted that she was bound for some definite port on the east coast, and when we had passed Madagascar, and the course was changed by a point or so, many of them said that it was Zanzibar. In the forecastle they had long disputes upon the matter, and I listened, but took no part in them. I was often there.

My own position on the ship was somewhat unusual. I was still cabin boy, but I was one of Mr. Brown's crew too, and had been for some months. I had grown nearly a foot in the past year, was a great, overgrown sixteen-year-old boy, with more muscle than I knew how to manage. I must have been a raw, red, awkward chap, but fortunately for me I did not know it. In virtue of my place in the boat I had acknowledged right in the forecastle, and I availed myself of it as often as I could. I loved to be there, sitting on the deck, perhaps, under the flaring tin lamp, or on a sea-chest which stood in a dark corner, and listening to the talk of the men. That talk, I suppose, was not edifying, but I did not join in it, and I heard there many yarns of whales and whaling, to which I listened with open ears and open mouth — and open nose. The smells of that forecastle!

I found out where we were probably bound by the simple expedient of looking on the chart. I had been rather neglecting my privileges in that respect. The course which was being pricked there led straight to Zanzibar or very near it, although there was no certainty that the course might not be changed. There was no other port of any consequence but Zanzibar. There was

elation among most of the old sailors when I told them of it, but Peter shook his head doubtfully.

'Zanzibar,' he said thoughtfully. 'I know it well enough. It's full of wickedness, and that of no white man's sort. Sodom and Gomorrah were nothing to it.'

Three days later we dropped our anchor in the harbor of Zanzibar.

CHAPTER XXI

I stood at the rail, gazing at the harbor and the town. My eyes were half closed, my chin rested on my hands, which clasped the rail, and I was lost in a dream of the East. Small boats plied the near waters, the boatmen crying out shrilly now and then, but my ears were deaf to their cries. The spacious harbor lay before me, with many vessels of all kinds and nationalities lying at anchor, from large steamers flying the British flag to Arab dhows. Life was there. I did not see the filth washing to and fro along the shore. I saw only the boats lying thickly there enveloped in golden light, their sails of all colors swinging lazily. I did not see the narrow, dirty streets, swarming with the life of all Asia and Africa; I saw only the mass of light and shadow, the white walls of houses showing pink in the light of the setting sun, the mosques, the forts, the palace of the Sultan; and, to the left of it as I stood, what appeared to be a ship, standing out clearly.

Peter's voice broke in upon my dream. He had come up silently, and was at my shoulder.

'It's a pretty town, lad,' he said, 'from this distance. It looks nice — but it ain't.'

I said nothing for a little while. 'What do they do here, Peter?' I asked then.

'Do? In Zanzibar? Most everything that they do in such a port. They'll stick you in the back if you don't keep your eyes open. But they run to cloves, mostly.'

'Cloves!'

'Aye, lad, cloves. They may not do so much as they did in that line, for they had a hurricane here last year, and lost most of the trees — or bushes, or whatever they are that bear 'em. It was a terror, that hurricane. I've just heard of it. But you can smell cloves if you take a good sniff. When we go ashore to-morrow we can see some of their storehouses, mebbe, if you want to. For myself, I'm not much interested in cloves.'

I was not greatly interested in cloves, either. When the boat took us ashore the next morning, Peter and me, and a crowd of liberty men, I saw the filth at the harbor's edge, and the crooked, dirty streets, hardly wide enough to be called alleys; and crowds of Hindus, Malays, Chinamen, negroes, and half-castes, with an Arab or a white man here and there — very few whites. I lost what little interest I had felt in cloves.

The other men went up one of the streets arm in arm, as many abreast as the street would hold, with a second rank behind. Peter stood looking after them until they had disappeared around a corner.

'I wonder,' he said reflectively, 'how they'll come back.' Then he turned to me. 'Well, lad, up anchor.'

We wandered about the town all day; toward the palace, to get a nearer view of the stone ship, which is a water-tank, or tanks, curiously carved; then back again through the narrow streets to the bazaars. I wondered at the heavy and massive wooden doors, almost black and all carved more or less, conspicuous in the white walls of the houses. We got hungry, and managed to find something to eat: a concoction of rice and various other things — I don't know what there was in it, but Peter seemed to know it, and spiced it rather

highly. Then we loafed from shop to shop, looking in at the things for sale, but buying nothing, although I was tempted two or three times. Peter restrained me. The shops had open fronts, and the proprietor was usually to be seen sitting fatly among the shadows. At last we came to a place where the street widened a little. Peter was hot and perspiring. So was I. The climate of Zanzibar is not all that could be desired. Peter proposed that we find a shady place where they sold something harmless to drink. He found it, and we sat in a shady corner, screened from the street, and sipped our drinks slowly. Mine, I remember, was coffee, but I should not have known it for the drink that went by that name on the ship, or even at home, although I was rarely allowed coffee at home. My mother had an idea that it was stunting.

A man came sauntering down the street from the direction of the palace. I noticed him particularly, for there was something queer about him; the silent, furtive way of walking, perhaps. I thought him a Hindu or a Malay, and Peter said that he was from the hills of India. There were many hillmen at the palace. The man seemed to be talking or muttering to himself, and he stopped in the middle of the open place, or square, and the sun beat down upon his head as he looked about him with fierce and melancholy eyes. They looked as if he had been a long time in hell, and saw no chance of getting out.

Our proprietor had settled himself on some cushions, and was dozing quietly, his hands clasped across his fat stomach. Something made him open his eyes, and he found the melancholy, desperate eyes of the man fixed

upon his. He cried out in terror, and started up, but he was not quick enough. The man's eyes flamed, he drew from his girdle a wicked-looking knife, made two bounds, and plunged the knife into the fat stomach.

Instantly all was confusion among the shops. Men, women, and children scuttled like hares. By the time the man had turned around, the square was utterly deserted except for a shopkeeper on the other side, who was hastily putting up his shutters, and for a little boy who was pounding desperately on a massive, carved black door, begging those behind it to let him in. I had just seen the door close quietly on the keeper of one of the bazaars and two women. The man had not noticed Peter and me sitting behind our screen in the darkness.

The man leaped across the square, and settled the shopkeeper who had been putting up the shutters. He was relieved of that duty forever. The little boy was still pounding on the door, and the man turned toward him. The boy began to scream.

'Here!' Peter growled. 'This won't do.' He got up hastily, upsetting the stand, with cups and glasses. They made a great crashing and ringing. Peter snatched away the screen. 'Hey you! Ahoy!' he yelled. ''Vast there!'

The man's head had turned at the crash. He abandoned his pursuit of the little boy, and with a smile of frightfulness he launched himself at Peter. Peter had reached in his belt for his knife, but it was no match at all for the knife coming for him. I knew it, and I freed myself and sprang out. I should have done so before, but my mind seemed paralyzed, and I incapable of

movement. It was like a dream in its effect, and in its quickness. The whole thing had not taken half a minute; hardly a quarter.

The man was almost upon Peter — I had not reached him — when there was a hiss at my ear, a flash in the sun, a streak of light shot past me, and for an instant I saw the handle of a knife quivering at his throat. It was just above the breast bone — a fair bull's-eye — and the blade was buried. To this day I remember exactly how it looked, quivering rapidly for an instant with the force of the blow; an ivory handle, stained and polished with much grasping, one point of its curved surface reflecting the sunlight in a fierce flicker, which hurt my eyes. Then the man made a lunge at Peter, missed, and fell sprawling.

Peter and I stood still, staring at him. He squirmed a little.

'It was well thrown,' said Peter thoughtfully; 'a'most too well.'

'Did for him,' said a voice right behind us. 'May as well take my knife.'

The owner of the voice stepped forward, bent, and coolly drew the knife from the throat. It was followed by a gush of blood. He moved his foot quickly, so that it should not be stained by the blood; then wiped the blade deliberately and carefully on the gaudy sash around the body on the ground. Then he stood straight again, slipping the knife into its sheath on his hip.

'Better fade away, mates,' he said. 'Follow me. I know the town.'

The massive black door was opening cautiously. The boy lay upon the ground, overcome with fright. The

knife-thrower moved away silently and swiftly, and Peter and I followed him. With twistings and turnings and doublings that would have done credit to the craftiest old fox, we came, at last, to the water-front, and to the boat landing. We saw the boat just putting off from the ship. I turned to our companion, for I had had no chance to see what he was like, and we had been too busy to observe anyway; but his back was not prepossessing, as he threaded those narrow lanes with swiftness and certainty. I saw Peter looking him over too, with his air of detachment, and a half smile of amusement on his face.

The man was a crafty old fox. That was sure. He showed no particular age, but might have been anywhere from thirty to fifty. He was of medium height, spare and lean and thin, with the leanness of an animal forced to forage for a scanty living — a pariah dog, and with the furtive air of such an animal. His face was seamed and crossed with lines, probably due to his manner of life rather than marking his age in any way. His eyes were a light china blue — they looked like pieces of china set into his head. There was absolutely no depth to them, and they were as hard as stones. The man might have been blind. He made me think of a cat I had known; a large striped yellow cat with one blue eye and one yellow one; a very still, calculating cat, contemplating the world calmly out of its cruel, painted eyes; a cat absolutely without affection, ready to take any action which promised success; a cat without remorse and without shame. It may be inferred that I do not like cats. In general, perhaps, I do not: I did not take to this man either.

It is not unlikely that the man felt what was passing in my mind, much as a dog feels such things. With a dog there is no need for acts, or even for a change of the expression of your face. He feels what is passing in your mind; smells it, perhaps. This knife-thrower, who threw a knife almost too well to suit Peter's fastidious temper, had been looking me over, much as I had been appraising him, each of us after his manner. Now he smiled faintly and disdainfully — perhaps he had had many such experiences — and looked away at our boat.

'Much obliged,' said Peter.

The man seemed surprised. 'For what?' he asked.

'The knife,' Peter replied.

'Oh, that,' the man said carelessly. 'He would have come at me next. I was behind you, and no place to slip away to. I do not like to run from a thing like that, so I stopped him.'

'You throw a knife well,' said Peter.

'I do,' said the man with cool and impersonal candor, as though he was telling the simple truth — which he undoubtedly was. 'Practice, you know, makes perfect. But the man was running amok. Anybody could have killed him and been thanked for it. I have seen several of them, Malays mostly. It seemed wiser to slip away. He was from the palace.'

Neither Peter nor I made any reply.

'Your ship's a whaler, I take it,' the man resumed presently. 'I spotted you for whalemen. Sperm?'

Peter nodded.

'To Australia, Sunda Strait, China Sea, Japan, and New Zealand?'

'I s'pose so,' said Peter, 'but I can't say for certain.'

'I wonder,' said the man slowly, 'if your vessel needs another hand? Are you a boatsteerer?' he asked, looking at Peter.

Peter smiled and shook his head.

'You ought to be,' the man said, 'or one of the mates. Been to sea all your life, haven't you?'

'Forty years, and over.'

'I thought so. Know a ship from truck to keelson. More real seamanship than the rest of the crew put together. Old navy man and merchant service, too, eh?'

'Yes,' said Peter, modestly. 'How did you know?'

'I know the signs.'

'Well,' said Peter, 'you might speak to the mate. That's Mr. Baker in charge of that boat — chief mate.'

How Peter could have told so certainly was beyond my comprehension; but he had good eyes. We stood silently until the boat came in. Then the man spoke to Mr. Baker, who received his application well enough. He looked the man over.

'What have you sailed in?'

'Almost everything, sir, from dhows to whalers, for the last ten years.'

'Whalers? What vessels?'

'Only one, the Apollo.'

'Apollo, eh? How long were you in the Apollo? And when?'

'The last year, sir.'

Mr. Baker grunted. 'Deserted, eh? We left her near Mauritius about a week ago, bound home.'

The man hesitated. 'Well, no, sir. She sailed without me.'

'Drunk, eh? Going to let it go at that?'

He hesitated again. 'Well, the truth is, sir, I wasn't sorry. I'm not ready to go home yet.'

'Think you'll be ready to go home in a couple of years? Where do you hail from?'

'Near Boston.'

Mr. Baker grunted again, and was silent for a little. Then he directed a piercing look at the man.

'Where has the Apollo been in the last year?'

'Over New Zealand way, Samoa and Kingsmill — South Seas.'

'Know those waters?'

'Very well, sir.'

Mr. Baker had been standing beside the boat. Now he turned away.

'All right. Wait here for me. I'll be back in half an hour. I'll take you aboard, and I have no doubt the captain will sign you. Any dunnage?'

'No, sir. It's all on the Apollo but what I stand in.'

Mr. Baker looked at Peter. 'You want to go aboard, Peter?'

'The sooner the better, sir. We've seen all we want of the town.'

'Liberty isn't up, you know. Muss, eh? Better get in the boat if anybody comes.'

Mr. Baker was back in half an hour, followed by porters with baskets of fresh provisions. Three or four more of our men had drifted down. When we were halfway to the ship Mr. Baker spoke.

'You — what's your name?'

'John Brown, sir,' answered the knife-thrower, with half a second's hesitation.

'John Brown, eh? We've got one John Brown on the ship. Wouldn't John Smith do you just as well?'

The man smiled. 'If you prefer it, sir, I'll make it do.'

Mr. Brown was on deck when we came aboard, I just ahead of the man who was to call himself John Smith. Mr. Brown looked kindly at me; then I saw a curious expression pass across his face, and his eyes hardened. It passed in an instant, like a cat's-paw over water, but I could not help noting it. There was surprise in it, and no gratification. I remember that I was disappointed, for I had thought Mr. Brown above those sudden dislikes.

Mr. Baker went into the cabin, and pretty soon Smith was sent for. In a quarter of an hour he came out again and went forward to the forecastle. There was no fault to be found with him, but I had an uneasy feeling that all was not right, and I went below to find Captain Nelson and to tell him of our adventure. I thought he ought to know it.

I found Mr. Baker still with him. They paid no attention to me, but talked in low tones, and I could not help hearing scraps of their talk, although I stood well back. The cabin was not very large.

'Seems an educated beggar,' Mr. Baker was remarking. 'Knocked about . . . my guess . . . beach-comber . . . can't tell what . . . may be good seaman.'

Captain Nelson sat silent for nearly a minute. 'Hendrickson spoke of him,' he said at last. 'Glad to get rid of him. Trouble-maker. Don't much like his cut, but that Apollo business settled it. He may know something about it. If he does, no reason why he shouldn't tell.' He turned to me. 'What is it, Tim?'

I told him my story, a matter of ten minutes, perhaps.

'H'm!' the captain grunted. 'H'm! You see, Mr. Baker. Peter's right enough. Throws a knife too well. Lucky he does, though, or where'd Peter be — and you, too, Tim? Can't have him carrying a knife like that here, though. Gently, now, if you can, but get that knife off him.'

To my great surprise, and to Mr. Baker's surprise, Smith made no objection whatever to depositing his knife, upon the captain's conditions. It was the same knife. I was ready to swear to it when Captain Nelson showed it to me for identification. Mr. Baker, I know, distrusted his readiness, and thought he must have another, probably the mate of it, but we never saw it.

CHAPTER XXII

We left the Arabian Sea with seven hundred and fifty barrels of oil in our hold, and stood to the eastward, as far as the Maldive Islands. Fifteen months out, and seven hundred and fifty barrels, and it would take nearly twenty-four hundred barrels to fill us up. If we did no better than that, on the average, it meant three years more of it before we could be sailing into Buzzard's Bay, a full ship. But I did not know that I cared greatly.

We had good weather, on the whole, to the Maldives. There were a good many days of calm or light airs, and we ran into one gale that continued for a little more than a day, and blew itself out. It did not seem so very bad, although it kept the men busy and wet. For the greater part of the time it was very pleasant sailing, with the wind dead astern or on the port quarter, and not too hot if I could lie on my back in the shadow of a sail, and look up at the sky and the foretruck describing a slow ellipse against it. The heel of the bowsprit was my favorite place, but on our present point of sailing that was fairly in the sun until the afternoon was half gone, even with the staysails out to starboard; and nobody — no white man — could bear the sun beating down upon him long with any comfort. I could stand the smell of the ship, which blew over me as I lay there. Indeed, I liked the smell of the ship. It was chiefly of oil and tar and rope and general hotness, and it brought back vividly to my mind the wharves of New Bedford on a summer noon.

When I had any time in the mornings I used to stand just abaft the foremast on the port side. It was wiser, of course, not to be caught loafing, although the officers would usually fail to see me when I was in plain sight. Standing so, I gazed off at the dimpling sea — on two occasions I saw a smudge of smoke on the horizon, and once I saw a sail — or, looking down, I watched the little wave, continuously breaking, which our bows pushed aside. We often had schools of flying fish about us, and sometimes I could see great numbers of albacore about the ship, a fish not unlike our horse-mackerel. The albacore chased the flying fish — not into the air, although they would often leap clear of the water — and caught them, too, by being on hand when they struck the water again. The albacore had their enemies. One morning I noticed that the albacore were huddled close to the ship, swimming in close ranks. Suddenly they disappeared — they had gone to the other side of the hull, I found — and I saw a swift shadow pass where they had been. It looked much like a shark swimming fast, at a considerable depth. Then the albacore were back again, and the shadow returned. The albacore scattered and fled, and the pursuer, a great swordfish, was among them, slashing with his sword, killing three or four. When they were gone, the swordfish returned from the pursuit, I suppose, and ate those he had killed. I did not see that part of it. We saw swordfish more than once, big fellows, twelve feet long or more, apparently basking on the surface. The men called them sail-fish. They have an enormous back fin, folded down on the back when they swim fast, but often erect above the water when they lie at the surface. It acts

like a sail, and carries them along at a very fair speed.

We were to see another phase of the activities of the swordfish. We had got nearly to the Maldives, about 72° east longitude, when the hail came down from aloft: 'There she breaches! And white waters!'

Everybody looked. It was a lone whale, rather a small one as far as we could judge at that distance, about three miles off on the weather bow. It was kicking up extraordinary antics, sounding briefly, then coming up on a half breach; lobtailing; running for a short distance, when it would give it up, and begin all over again.

The officers watched the whale while we stood toward it. At last Mr. Baker was satisfied.

'Swordfish,' he said.

The whale remained nearly in the same spot while we came up. His attention was so completely taken up by the swordfish that we did not lower until the ship was considerably less than a quarter of a mile away. Then we put down two boats, Mr. Baker's and Mr. Brown's, which ran down under both sail and oars. We did not think it necessary to avoid making a noise, for the whale could not get away if he wanted to. By the time we had got nearly within darting distance, he had almost ceased struggling, and seemed about ready to give up the ghost. The Prince was just standing up and reaching for his iron, and Mr. Baker's boat was approaching from the other side. Out of the corner of my eye I could see Starbuck taking his harpoon from the crotch.

Suddenly the Prince gave a yell: 'Swordfish! Look out!'

Mr. Brown heaved mightily on the steering oar, to lay the boat around, but it was too late. There was a

sharp crack, we felt the boat rise under us, and Kane cried out in surprise and pain. I turned my head around quickly — I had no business to do so, and I knew it as soon as I had time to think. I saw the point of the sword sticking up beside Kane's thigh. Kane had dropped his oar, grabbed the sword point with both hands, and was yelling for the iron. The sword had gone through the thin planking — the garboard strake — and through the thwart, and had given Kane a flesh wound in the thigh. It was a narrow escape for Kane, but he was not thinking of that. His whole mind was upon holding the sword without cutting his hands too badly. The swordfish was thrashing about viciously, shaking the boat, and threatening to break out the bottom planking. It all happened more quickly than I can tell it. The Prince was alert, and he reached over, and jabbed the harpoon clear through the fish. Then he seized a lance, and churned it up and down through the heart of the fish, turning it as he churned. He could not reach the gills, where swordfish are usually lanced. The violent struggles of the swordfish ceased, he quivered once, and lay still; but his sword remained sticking through the thwart even after Kane had let go of it, and Kane's thigh was bleeding freely.

'Badly hurt, Kane?' Mr. Brown asked.

'No, sir,' said Kane, hammering on the end of the sword with his paddle, which he had taken from its place for the purpose. 'If I can only get this bloody sword out — but it's stuck tight.'

'All the better,' said Mr. Brown. 'Heave on the line, boys, and break it off.'

At the second heave a heavy strain came on the line,

and at the third there was another sharp crack, and the sword broke off at the nose. The broken sword remained sticking through the planking and the thwart, and the body of the fish came up alongside the boat. It was a big fish, two thirds the length of the boat.

While we were having it out with the swordfish, Mr. Baker had fastened to the whale, which was already dead, and we lay there and waited for the ship. There had been at least four swordfish attacking the whale, and nobody knew how many more. The whale, a small bull of thirty-seven barrels as he afterward tried out, stood no chance at all against half a dozen big swordfish, which were of a kind fairly common in the Indian Ocean, about twice as long as those I was familiar with. We got our prize on deck, and ate it within the next few days. The flesh was a little coarser than that of the smaller ones, but very good. We got others from time to time, as chances offered, as long as we were in their waters, and dolphins and porpoises occasionally.

Attacks by swordfish upon boats are not uncommon. It seems likely enough that they mistake the hull of the boat for the body of a whale. Attacks on the hull of a ship, however, seem to me to be due to accident. The fish which are the common prey of the swordfish often huddle close to the hull of a vessel, and the swordfish, in its attack upon them, may run its sword into the hull, although there have been instances where several swordfish have made a concerted attack upon the hull. We had a sword penetrate the planking of the Clearchus later on, before we had got out of the Indian Ocean, which I was convinced was due to accident. The sword went cleanly through the copper, the sheathing, a three-

inch oak plank, and an oak rib, and stuck four inches into the hold; then it broke off. I saw, many years ago, in New Bedford, the Morning Star, a whaler, with a sword which had been driven clear through her keel, eighteen inches of solid oak, and the point of the sword still sticking a good eight inches beyond it.

CHAPTER XXIII

From the point where the swordfish killed the whale we laid a course southwesterly to the westward of Réunion. We had the southeast trades all the way, and did not touch a brace until we were between Réunion and Madagascar. There the trades left us, and we laid a southerly course, with shifting winds. We were getting into the 'horse latitudes,' and the wind was generally strong, at first from the east and northeast; still farther south it held usually from the westward, stronger yet, and gales were frequent.

I had taken an unreasoning dislike to Smith. I could not account for it, and I do not remember that I tried to. It was much like that of a dog, and may have been due to the same cause. His outward behavior was unexceptionable. He was always pleasant, properly deferential to the officers, with due regard to each man's taste in degree and kind of deference. He was a diplomat. Even to Mr. Brown his manner was perfect: silent, brief when words were needed, quite respectful and pleasant. I think that Mr. Brown was wondering whether he had done Smith entire justice. But the men were less alive and willing. Nobody could help seeing it, although few would have ascribed the change to Smith.

One day, when we were off the southern end of Madagascar, Peter spoke to me of it.

'It's that Smith,' he said. 'It's his doing.'

'Why don't you report it to the old man?' I asked. 'Or tell one of the officers — Mr. Brown, if you like.'

'What'd I report?' he said. 'Smith hasn't said anything or done anything. They'd ask me what, and I'd say he laughed at the men, and they'd laugh at me — and I'd fall off the topsail yardarm, with a knife in my back, as like as not, in one o' these gales we'll be running into. And what good'd that do to anybody?'

'Does Smith carry a knife?' I asked quickly.

'I've never seen it; and he's one of the pleasantest-spoken men I ever saw — always at my elbow when I'm at my scrimshawing, admiring. But he's a trouble-maker. He'll have the men ready for mutiny, the first thing you know, with his laughing at them, and making fun of them, and despising them for doing what they have to do. There ain't anything else will do it so quick or so sure. And there ain't anything he says or does't you can put your finger on. I've been to sea a good many years, and I know a beach-comber when I see one — full of all kinds of hard drink that would burn out the insides of a better man, and filled with disease and evil. Smith must have been a good man to stand it so long — and come out no worse.'

At that moment Smith passed us, and Peter began to talk of something else.

When we reached the latitude of the Crozets we began the regular cruising programme at once. We were far enough south to see ice occasionally, although it was a little late in the season for that; but the water was very cold, and the wind, almost without exception while we were in those waters, was very strong from the westward, blowing a gale about half the time. We had a good deal of fog. I did get sight of the Crozets once, distant, dark mountain peaks, cold and forbidding. We

had about us, most of the time, an albatross or two, and gannets, boobies, petrels, and Cape pigeons in plenty. I suppose they must nest on the islands.

Sperm whales are not to be found in these latitudes, although right whales are.

We got no whales here; indeed, our actions led me to think that the captain did not expect any, or want any. He took no great pains, at any rate, and we quartered the grounds only once. Then we wore ship, and ran down to leeward. When we had reached the easterly limit of our cruising ground, we did not come about and beat up, as I expected, but continued to run to the eastward before a gale of wind, with alternations of fog and rain, three hundred miles farther, more or less. It was very disagreeable weather.

At last we found ourselves, one morning, in the midst of great numbers of birds, some in the air, and many others in the water: teals, giant petrels, gulls, terns, cormorants, Cape pigeons, and albatrosses; and an abundance of penguins. The cormorants and penguins were new to me. We knew, of course, that we must be very near to some land, but the weather was so thick that we could not see above half a mile. Sail was reduced, and we ran cautiously. We could feel the nearness of land. Even I could do that. About the middle of the day the fog lifted somewhat, and became a thick mist. Through it we saw the mass of Kerguelen, or Desolation Island, its peaks lost in the rolling clouds of fog. A little later we rounded a promontory, and entered a bay with many little islands dotted over it. Of course I compared the bay with Buzzard's Bay, for that was my standard of comparison always, especially the part from New

Bedford to Cuttyhunk. This bay seemed not very different in size, but the shores were as different from the shores of Buzzard's Bay as they well could be. The land was steep and high and rugged, making the bay more like my idea of a Norwegian fiord, although I know the fiords of Norway only as my imagination pictures them. On that first day the land seemed to run right up without limit beyond the clouds, which hung low. There were days, later, when we saw the fields of perpetual snow on the summits of the mountains, and caught glimpses of the glaciers running down the valleys.

There was fresh water here in plenty, and some days were spent in filling our casks and in giving the men a run ashore. There was no danger of desertion, and absolutely no chance of harm of the sort usually connected with shore liberty. Indeed, it was funny to see how afraid the men were that the ship would sail without them. They went about in clumps, and Smith attached himself closely to Peter and me. It was good to feel solid earth under our feet once more.

Not long after this Captain Nelson got into a towering rage against Smith for insubordination, and against Mr. Snow for permitting it. Smith's insubordination was, in itself, a small matter. He had failed to carry out some order of Mr. Snow's, but had done something else instead. What he had done was just as good as what he had been ordered to do — it may have been better — but on a ship orders are orders, and must be obeyed. Mr. Snow, instead of insisting that his orders be obeyed, had first stormed and blustered, and then weakly pleaded with Smith. As far as I could gather, Smith had paid no attention to his storming, had smiled at his

blustering, and disregarded his pleading, but had gone on with whatever he was doing. He had done it very well, and in a smart and seamanlike manner. There was no fault to be found with him on that count, but no ship-master can pass over such rank and obvious disobedience.

I had never seen Captain Nelson in a towering rage before, and I witnessed it but once again. Twice is once too many. When he was in such a rage he was quiet — ominously quiet, although he was always a quiet man; his mouth became a straight, thin line half hidden by his beard, and his eyes were cold and hard. He summoned Smith to the cabin and asked him what he had to say for himself. I was not present, but the quarters on a whale-ship are not large, and the partitions are not sound-proof. I could imagine, easily enough, the captain's eyes boring through Smith, and Smith's opaque, china-blue eyes gazing innocently at the captain; for Smith, in such an encounter, was Captain Nelson's equal. In education and breeding he was superior, and I had no doubt that his experience of clashes of the kind was far greater than the captain's; but Captain Nelson's mental processes were not devious, as Smith's were. He knew where he was going, and went by the most direct path. If he found anything in his way he smashed it. His intentions were good, and he had the authority, and he meant to maintain it; this above all things.

At first Smith pretended not to know what the captain was talking about, but the captain cut him short. Then he proceeded to explain why what he had done — I did not know just what it was — was better than what he had been ordered to do; that it was dark, and they were

in some hurry, and it saved time. Smith was a thorough seaman — he would have been good at anything he undertook — and the seamanship shown in his explanation impressed Captain Nelson, and somewhat softened the rebuke which came. But it came. Smith was dismissed with the warning that his first duty was to obey orders, and never to let it happen again. I had no difficulty in picturing his respectful, pleasant smile, and his bow, as he withdrew with a 'Thank you, sir.'

Mr. Snow's interview was different. I did not hear him say anything. Captain Nelson's low voice said various cutting things very briefly. I could not hear all of it, but the gist of the captain's remarks was that one of the first duties of an officer was to maintain his authority; that he owed it to the ship, to his superiors, and to the owners, and that any officer who was unable to do so would be broken — deprived of his rank. Then I heard the murmur of Mr. Snow's voice as he asked a question. Captain Nelson's answer came like a bomb, with a blow of his fist upon the table.

'Shoot him, sir! Shoot him! I'd do it in a second.'

Then Mr. Snow faded out of the cabin.

In the course of time we turned once more to leeward, and ran for Desolation. This time we did not land in the great bay to which we had first gone, but in a comparatively small harbor farther to the westward. Nobody knew why we had come — at least, nobody but the captain and perhaps some of the officers, and they said nothing. I ventured to ask Captain Nelson.

He smiled at my question. 'May be something worth while, Tim,' he said rather gruffly. 'Never can tell.'

I said nothing more. There seemed to be nothing

there that we wanted, and we got up our anchor, ran along the coast a little way, and poked our nose into the next harbor. There are a great many of these natural harbors along the coast of Kerguelen, deep, with mountainous sides, except on the western end. The prevailing winds are westerly, and in the course of ages the sea has eaten into the shore of the windward end, and smoothed it out.

We called at a number of these fiords. In one or two of them we anchored, and the men were given a chance to stretch their legs, only the officer in charge knowing his errand; into others we merely sailed, and then sailed out again. At last we struck one that seemed to be to the captain's liking, and a large party went ashore, headed by the captain.

The captain carried a Spencer carbine, and so did Mr. Brown. Mr. Baker preferred a lance. There were but two of the Spencers available, and we had no ammunition to waste, although there was enough for ordinary occasions on a long voyage. The Spencer was a short, repeating rifle, rather heavy, but an extremely handy gun. Its magazine carried seven cartridges, with a lead projectile half an inch in diameter, or thereabouts, and the rifle was sighted for half a mile to the best of my recollection. It was a gun which had done good work in the Civil War, and there were a good many of them in New Bedford.

When we had got away from the beach I was so glad to feel the springy turf under my feet that I ran ahead at the top of my speed, which was good enough to distance everybody, although several of the men were running clumsily. That is, I distanced everybody but

Smith. He could outrun me easily, and kept ahead, flinging back over his shoulder good-natured taunts. Somewhat stung by his taunts, I went after him, and he led me off to one side, up a slope covered thickly with huge boulders, or perhaps outcroppings of rock. He ran up the steep side of these rocks — as I thought, to show off — and I followed, struggling up where he had leaped, and jumping from the tops, as he had done. At last we came to a rock steeper and higher than any other that we had been over. Smith leaped lightly up its side, and jumped from its top. My breath was gone, and I was tired, but I managed to get up; my foot slipped as I was about to jump, and I fell instead, striking my head.

When I came to myself Smith was on the top of the great rock from which I had fallen, bending over, his hands busy with a big round stone which rested on the rock, very near the edge. Even in my dazed condition I knew enough to spring out of the way, for the stone would have fallen upon me in a few seconds more.

'What are you doing?' I cried angrily.

Smith smiled pleasantly, and kept on tugging at the stone. 'Only trying to move this stone. I was afraid it would fall on you.'

My head was clearing — and aching. I was sure the stone had not been there when I fell. And why, if his object was to save me, had Smith not dragged me out of its way? It would have been easier, and simpler, and the natural thing to do. Was he trying to kill me, and in a way which would make my death seem a regrettable accident? It was not to be borne. A great rage filled my heart as the question seemed to answer itself.

Upon landing, I had provided myself with a club, as a

boy will naturally pick up any handy stick. That club lay where I had fallen; but I staggered to my feet, and got it. In that moment I became as mad as any Berserker. Nothing could hurt me, nothing could stop me. I would kill Smith. I was no longer small, but fairly grown, and I was strong. I heaved up my club and I suppose I glared at Smith. He stood there, on top of the rock, and laughed; and I walked around the rock, looking for a place to mount, where it would be less like storming a citadel. Smith laughed as if he would split; and there came a call for me, and Peter and Mr. Brown hove in sight.

I did not kill Smith. As I stood there, breathing hard, my rage left me suddenly, as my rages always did. Smith jumped down off the rock, and came to me, smiling, as though to say something, but I turned away. In my heart I was sure of him now. He went to Mr. Brown, and said something about my fall, and about its having put me out of my head for a time. Mr. Brown listened, but made no reply.

After spending nearly the whole day in tramping over hills, we went back to the ship empty-handed. I did not know what we had been looking for.

It was February, 1874, before we left Desolation behind us, and headed northerly for warmer seas. There was not a man aboard who was not glad to see the last of this home of gales and wet and cold.

CHAPTER XXIV

For five days the wind held from the westward, and we held a course a little east of north. I saw the chart every day, and sometimes pricked the position of the ship on it. I took an occasional observation, and worked out that position, checking up my observation, and the position worked out from it by the captain's. I really think that I knew more of the mathematics of the matter than he did. In another respect Captain Nelson had an immense advantage. That was in dead reckoning, which was very important where we had clear skies, either by day or by night, only about half the time or less.

The prickings on the chart pointed straight for Amsterdam Island, with St. Paul possibly rising above the horizon to leeward. Then we ran into head winds and a gale, which lasted for two days. That gale lost me completely. I tried dead reckoning, and I was so mortified about it that I did not mention it to anybody. I spent all my spare time, for the first day after we ran out of the bad weather, in trying to reconcile my reckoning with the captain's.

It was nearly sunset when I gave it up finally, and went on deck, feeling rather low in my mind, for the observation on that day had shown the official reckoning to be only a few miles out. I stood at the rail, under the stern of the waist boat, and gazed out moodily over the water, cursing myself; for I had got into the way of the ship long before, and could curse fluently, although I was no expert at it, as Mr. Baker was.

I must have been muttering my curses aloud, for I heard a voice at my shoulder. It was Peter.

'What's gone wrong, lad?' he asked, half laughing. 'Cussing won't mend it.'

I turned to him. 'I don't know about that, Peter,' I said. 'It relieves my mind. I feel better already.'

He laughed. 'Do you so? Well, mebbe. But, Timmie, I'll have something for you to-morrow.'

'Got your model done, Peter?' I asked eagerly. I had been but little in the forecastle for months. I did not want to have to speak to Smith, or even to see him.

'Mebbe I have,' he answered, smiling. 'Mebbe I have. I could be tinkering at it longer, but I don't believe 'twould better it. I'll give it to you to-morrow.'

'Can't you give it to me now, Peter? You might as well. You won't do anything more to it.'

'Well,' said Peter, almost coyly. 'Well, I might get it now. But come up for'ard, or into the fo'c's'le. I ought not to be standing here, gamming.'

I hesitated. I was reluctant to go into the forecastle. 'I don't like to, Peter. I — you see — Smith —'

'Aye,' said Peter soberly, 'I know. Smith — well he'll get the lance the first thing he knows. He's worse and worse, as independent as a clerk; fair reckless. The old man gave him another dressing-down a few days ago, a stiff one. Did you know it?'

I nodded. I knew it, although I did not hear it.

'And he bragged of it,' Peter went on; 'came back to us, and bragged of it, and laughed at the old man and the officers. Said he'd been threatened, and he'd show the old man yet. Mr. Snow's afraid of him, to speak plainly, and he's got the idea that the others are too, at

heart. And he's got the men discontented and grumbling. It's my idea that he thinks they'll be ready soon for anything he proposes. I don't know why the old man don't do something about it. He must know.'

I checked the reply which was on my lips, for Smith was approaching at that moment. He always contrived to pass when Peter and I were talking. He was suspicious, very likely, but did not show it. He gave us a smile and a pleasant word.

'Come on, then,' said Peter, turning to go forward, 'and I'll get it.'

I followed, and waited by the foremast while Peter dived below. He emerged in a minute, holding the model in his hand.

'I hope you'll like it, lad,' he said, 'and it may give you some pleasure to look at it now and again, and remind you of the years you spent in the old ship.'

'Oh, Peter!' I said. 'Oh, Peter! Like it!' It was a fairy thing, with its ivory sails so thin that you could almost see through them, and the tiny boats complete down to the smallest thing in them; every oar, lance, harpoon, and keg in its proper place. There were even ivory knives on the cleats. And the model of the ship itself had every rope and block, and every ring-bolt in the deck; and the deck showed each plank, even to the worn places in the actual deck.

I had not seen the model for some time, and had not expected that it would be so faithful; but I should have known Peter better.

He was smiling with gratification. 'It's not likely that it'll give you the pleasure it has me,' he said. 'I've been slow at it, but I've been doing a thing or two along with

it, and what's a little time? Take it along, Timmie. I'll make you a case for it, so's you can pack it in your chest.'

'Thank you, Peter,' I began. 'I'll keep it always.' So I have kept it. The ivory is now much yellowed by time, but it is the same delicate, fairy-like thing, and as perfect as ever. I should have said more, and was smiling and hesitating, not knowing what to say, when the watch was sent aloft to shorten sail.

'What's that for, Peter?' I asked in surprise. We were not cruising, and normally we should not have shortened sail.

'I don't know, lad. It's breezing up a bit, and it's like enough the old man's afraid he'll overrun whatever he's aiming for. He didn't say anything to me about it. You might ask him what he means by it.'

I laughed. Captain Nelson was on deck, standing just forward of the after house, where he had a clear view of all that went on aloft. In view of what happened, I think he had a definite purpose in being there.

When the men were sent aloft to handle sail it was the established custom for the boatsteerers to take the yardarms. The other men would lay out along the yard in accordance with their speed and activity, the fattest and the laziest getting the bunt of the sail; but however good a man might be, it was his duty to give way to the boatsteerers. The yardarms were the places of honor, as the duties there called for the greatest skill and quickness. Joe Miller was good, but he was neither as skilful nor as quick as Smith. Smith knew it, as we all did. He may have craved the chance to show off before the men, or it may have been only a part of his scheme to exalt Smith

and to bring into disrepute all in authority; but he reached the crosstrees two jumps ahead of Miller, and was on the footropes before him.

Miller stopped for a moment and ordered Smith to come in and let him pass. Smith paid no attention to the order. Miller repeated it, but Smith was already at the lee yardarm, and he looked back at Miller and snarled silently — like a cat — fixing him with those opaque china-blue eyes of his. A fight on a yard with Smith was not to Miller's liking, and he looked down on deck, where Mr. Snow stood. Mr. Snow bravely bellowed out the order once more, but Smith paid no attention, affecting not to hear. Mr. Snow had turned away immediately, and after a moment's hesitation, Miller went to work next to Smith. The other men on the yard had hard work to suppress their snickers.

Captain Nelson had observed it, as he observed almost everything. He told Mr. Snow to send Smith aft.

The Clearchus was an old ship, and had single topsails — not divided into upper and lower topsails, as they were on all of the later vessels. It made an enormous sail, clumsy and hard to handle. When they had the foretopsail reefed and the men had come down, Smith came aft. Captain Nelson was waiting for him.

'My man,' he said very sternly and quietly, 'you have disobeyed orders again. I warn you for the third time — and the last time. The next time I shall act, and suddenly. You'll do well not to let the next time happen. Not a word from you!' he added, for Smith was about to speak. 'Go forward!'

Smith turned — smiling, I guessed, when his back was turned to the captain — and went forward. My heart

was in my throat for a few minutes. Anything might have happened. I had dim forebodings as I turned in that night and lay awake for some time. I do not know that I was frightened; rather, I think, it was the elation with which I anticipated a fight, and it was excitement which kept me awake. I had my mind made up to stay awake all night, but it takes a good deal to keep a healthy boy awake all night when he is in the open air all day, with the wind from thousands of miles of ocean blowing upon him, and when I awoke with a start it was daylight.

Everything was serene when I got on deck. The wind was high from the southwest, with an occasional screeching gust; but the sky was clear, the sun showed bright, and the Clearchus slogged along, pitching and rolling. I had my model with me, for I was as anxious to show it and have it admired as a child with a new toy. Indeed, that was exactly what I was.

In these various exhibitions two hours passed. At the end of that time I found myself with Starbuck and the Prince standing by the starboard rail, just forward of the gangway. They saw Peter, called to him, and he joined us. Starbuck had the model in his hand, turning it from side to side, and gazing at it soberly.

''Twould have more beauty,' Peter observed, 'if 'twas a model of the Annie Battles. I should like to carve one of the Battles.'

'It has beauty enough,' said Starbuck thoughtfully. 'How long is it since we've seen the Battles?'

'Nigh on to a year,' Peter replied, counting up the months. 'We'd almost forgotten her. Most of the crew's clean forgotten.'

'I haven't,' said Starbuck. 'I've always wondered what happened on the Battles — what happened to Fred Coffin. I'm sure enough that something did.'

Peter agreed with him, and the Prince grunted. I, for a wonder, said nothing. At that instant the cry came down from the masthead, 'Land, ho!' It took a sailor to understand that cry; to others it would have been as unintelligible as a brakeman's cry of the name of a station.

Landfall must have been expected, for Captain Nelson was on deck with his glass. He did not even ask the usual question, 'Where away?' but went at once up the main rigging and searched the horizon on the lee bow. Presently he came down and spoke to the officer of the watch.

'Well as she goes.'

'Well as she goes,' the officer repeated; and repeated the order to the man at the wheel, who was within easy hearing of the captain.

'Well as she goes,' said the man at the wheel, and kept her on her course.

'What is it, Peter?' I asked. 'Amsterdam?'

Peter nodded. 'Yes, lad.' We had passed St. Paul early in the night before. It would have been well out of sight, anyway.

Amsterdam soon rose within sight from the deck, and I went down and got my glass and left my precious model. I found a secluded spot where I should not be likely to be seen, and watched the island as we drew nearer. I saw steep slopes, densely wooded, rising from the sea to a great height, but nothing else was to be distinguished, even when we were pretty near. At last

we had the island abeam, not over three miles away. I had the glass at my eyes, and was slowly sweeping over the surface, up and down, and to and fro. Nothing appeared but the green of the tops of trees or bushes. I could not tell which, but they looked like trees. As I moved the glass systematically, so that I could see the whole of the island and lose nothing, suddenly I came again to the sea; but there had seemed to be something like a little spot of color, and it fluttered. It had shown on the silhouette of the island, against the sky, and I could not be sure of the color. I had passed it by, and lost it, before it had impressed itself on my attention; but I hunted for it again, and I found it at last.

The ship had advanced enough to show the green of tree-tops beyond the fluttering thing by the time I had found it again. I looked a long time before I could make out what it was, but I finally made it out. About halfway up the long slope a tree had been stripped of its upper branches, so that it made a tolerable pole. To this pole had been fastened a sailor's common red woolen undershirt; that was what it was — what it had been. It had been there for a long time, for it showed but a faint trace of its color, and it had whipped to a rag in the winds. The instant I knew it for what it was, my heart jumped up into my throat, and I jumped up and raced aft.

Captain Nelson listened to the brief tale which I poured out hurriedly, the words tumbling over each other in my eagerness.

He nodded. 'All right, Tim,' he said. 'We're going in there, and we'll see what it means.'

Amsterdam Island is an ancient volcano. On the

northeast, or leeward side of the island, the old crater walls have crumbled somewhat, making a harbor of a sort, and it was there we were bound. Soon after I spoke to the captain the yards were braced around, and we changed our course to the eastward. Then the men were sent aloft to take in sail. It happened once more that it was Smith's watch, and the captain watched him narrowly. He sprang up the fore rigging — again ahead of Miller — and took his station at the foretopsail yardarm — the lee yardarm.

Mr. Snow was not on deck. I found afterward that he had been suspended from duty.

Captain Nelson was in the second of his cold rages, — the last I ever saw. He said nothing to Smith, however, but he turned to me.

'Tim,' he said distinctly, 'go below and get my Spencer and a clip of cartridges, and bring them to me. Hurry.'

I remember very clearly how mixed my feelings were as I dived into the cabin and got down the captain's Spencer. I did not dream that Smith would not obey orders when the captain had his rifle in his hands — if he knew the captain. It did not occur to me that perhaps he did not know the captain.

I put the loaded rifle in Captain Nelson's hands, and stood to one side.

'Foretopsail yard, there!' he hailed. 'You Smith!'

Smith looked up.

'Lay in off that yard!'

Smith insolently put his hand behind his ear, as if he had not heard. His hearing was particularly good, and the captain knew it.

'Lay in off that yard!' the captain roared. There could be no excuse for not understanding that.

I do not know whether Smith was simply crazy, or whether he thought no captain would dare to shoot a man. I did not really believe it would come to that, but when I saw Smith deliberately put his thumb to his nose, and wiggle his fingers at the captain, I knew that it was the end of him. And the captain raised his rifle, and shot Smith through the head. What else could he do? It was a flagrant case of mutiny. All pretense of discipline, all authority would have been at an end if he had not. To many it may seem like murder. I never knew the rights of the matter, but nothing was ever done about it.

The crew had stopped work for the moment, to see how the contest was coming out. When the shot rang out — Spencers did not ring out; it was more like a blow of a sledge — and through the smoke I saw Smith throw up his hands, I gasped. As the body fell like lead into the sea, a gasp went up from the men; then I heard a sort of murmuring from them. They were thrown into consternation. Some went to work again with shaking hands, others stopped work entirely. Those on deck stirred and moved about uncertainly. I was reminded of the ripples which cross and recross when a stone is thrown into a corner of a dock.

Captain Nelson called to them sharply. 'To your duty, men! In with that topsail!' He tapped his rifle as he spoke.

'Aren't you going to lower a boat for him?' The question came from the group of men about the foremast.

'No. He's a dead man, and a mutineer. I lower no boat for him.'

The men on the yard were at their work again, and the murmurings quickly died out. In five minutes more they were all as busy as though nothing had happened. Captain Nelson surprised everybody by ordering a boat lowered. Mr. Baker gave the captain a curious look, but said nothing, and proceeded to lower.

'Poor devil!' said the captain, whose burst of anger had exhausted itself. 'I had to do it. Follow us in to anchorage, Mr. Baker, and if you find the body we'll attend to it.'

On my wall above the model, as I sit here now, hangs Smith's knife: the one to which Peter owed his life. I got possession of it — honestly — later, and I kept it for — well, because I wanted to keep it. There are associations connected with that knife. The idea of getting possession of it seized me as Mr. Baker lowered and dropped astern to search for Smith's body.

We left him quartering the water carefully in the search, and drifted down to our anchorage less than a half-mile from a little beach. Three scarecrows stood upon that beach, and watched us come to anchor. They were clad in rags, and had ragged, bushy beards. I was looking at them through my glass, but I did not know them, and did not expect to. They stood quite still on the beach waiting for our boat, which had been dropped as soon as we rounded to, and before the anchor was let go.

Captain Nelson stood by the after house, looking after the boat, and waiting for it to come back. It came at last, and the three men came easily over the side.

The first was a big man, as big as my father, with a smile like his. He advanced toward the captain, with his hand out, and the captain went to meet him.

'Glad to see you, Cap'n,' he said in a big, gentle voice.

'How are you, Fred?' said Captain Nelson, with a hearty grip of his hand. 'Kind o' thought I might find you somewhere about.'

It was Captain Coffin of the Annie Battles.

CHAPTER XXV

Mr. Baker came back to the ship about a couple of hours after the marooned men had come aboard. He had spent more than an hour in going to and fro, looking for Smith's body, but had seen no sign of it, and had concluded that it had sunk at once. That seemed strange, for the lungs must have been full of air, but nobody gave it a second thought unless some of the most disaffected of the crew did; none of them, in all probability, gave so much as a first thought to the fact. I do not really doubt that Smith was dead, and that his body was swaying about in the ooze at the bottom of the sea, unless the sharks got it first. But I remember that soon after I got home, I saw an account — merely an item of a few lines in a shipping paper — of a man's having been taken off Amsterdam Island, and the description of the man might have been the description of Smith. He had forgotten who he was and how he got there, and he had been badly hurt, but he had managed to live alone for two years on the island. However, whether that was Smith or not, he passed out of our lives when he dropped from the yard.

Captain Coffin was in the cabin with Captain Nelson when Mr. Baker's boat's crew came over the side. Mr. Baker showed no surprise when he heard of it, but Starbuck did. He immediately sought out the two men who had come aboard with Captain Coffin, and I suppose he got their story. I was not free, as I was wanted to wait upon the two captains; but that was no disadvantage,

for I got the story as Captain Coffin told it to Captain Nelson. They sat at the cabin table, leaning back in their chairs at their ease, with a pitcher of hot rum and water between them. I remember the pitcher exactly. It was a rather small white crockery pitcher, with a bluish tinge, such as they used to serve water in at country hotels, only smaller. They sat there quietly, and the hot rum and water steamed gently between them; and Captain Coffin had his fingers clasped loosely about his glass, but he drank little, and that in little sips. Between times he either gazed contentedly out of the cabin window, saying nothing, or he spoke briefly of his experiences in the Battles or on Amsterdam. His utterances were never long at any one time, but always punctuated by a sip and a long look out of the window. Captain Nelson said nothing at all. I stuck around rather more closely than was necessary.

It was the old story of mutiny, but in this case for no reason whatever except that the mutineers saw a good chance of taking the vessel. The ringleaders must have laid their plans before the Battles sailed, Captain Coffin thought, and have enlisted some of the crew in the scheme. Possibly Wallet knew about it also. They met the Clearchus at every opportunity, until Wallet went aboard of the Battles, where he was at the time when Captain Coffin told the story, so far as he knew; but he had turned out to be such a pusillanimous cuss that he had not been able to maintain himself in the position first given him. The bothering of the Clearchus was but incidental; but the crew got so much fun out of their sport with us — or Drew did, which was more to

the point — that they could not resist the temptation to try it whenever they had the chance.

Sam Drew was the leader in the mutiny. At the name Captain Nelson grunted, and said that he knew Sam Drew, and had never known any good of him. Captain Coffin nodded, and went on with the story. It had all happened before they got to Fayal. Drew was a boatsteerer. One morning, as Captain Coffin came on deck, six men fell upon him at once, pinioning his hands, his arms and his legs, and throttling him. They must have rehearsed their parts pretty thoroughly, for each man seized some particular member, and clung to it; he was seized around the knees, as in a tackle at football — football had hardly developed the tackle at that time — and thrown to the deck, while the sixth man choked him. Captain Coffin is a tough customer to attack, and the men knew it. With two men on each arm, and choked by another, while the man who had tackled him took a turn about his ankles with the slack of the main sheet, he still put up a stiff fight, and almost got the two men on his right arm overboard. The odds were too great, however. He was soon bound hand and foot, tied to a stanchion, gasping for breath.

He had been aware of a struggle going on forward. He now saw Mr. Mayhew, his first mate, beheaded by a single stroke of a spade, and Jim Carter, the second mate, badly wounded by a lance. The third mate was not to be seen, but he was soon brought up from below. Then Drew called a council of a few of his cronies — a Council of State, perhaps — and spoke briefly to them. Captain Coffin could not hear what he said to them, but he heard plainly what he said afterward.

'Over with him, men,' he said, indicating the body of poor Mayhew.

The body was unceremoniously pitched into the sea, and the head after it. Then the men hesitated.

'Over with him!' said Drew impatiently. 'You know what happens to the man who refuses to obey orders.'

The men laid hold of the wounded Carter and began dragging him to the rail. He was too badly wounded to resist, but Captain Coffin struggled and roared at them. The men hesitated again, but Drew smiled.

'Never mind him,' he said. 'He can't do anything. I'm in command of this vessel now. Over with him!'

They got Carter up on the rail, and pitched him into the sea. Then Drew turned to the third mate. He, poor fellow, was not wounded. He saw that his fate was to be left swimming in the middle of the Atlantic, and he tried to meet that fate like a man. It was too much. He could not; and when Drew offered him the choice of joining them or of going over the side, he joined. It is hard to blame him for his choice.

Captain Coffin then saw the men start for him; but it was only to carry him below and to throw him on his bunk, bound as he was. He lay there until the next morning.

Drew came to him about the middle of the forenoon, at just about four bells, and sat down beside him and said he wanted to have a talk. He said that, unfortunately, the third mate had fallen overboard during the night. This may have been true, or he may have been distrusted and have been thrown overboard, or his conscience may have tortured him so that he jumped overboard. Captain Coffin never knew which was the truth,

but the fact was that he was no longer there, and the vessel was without a navigator excepting the captain. Drew, therefore, had a proposition to make, and the captain could take it or leave it. It was this: that the captain should navigate, under guard in his cabin, coming out only at night for observations. If he would not consent to that he would follow his three mates.

That was rather a hard choice; but Captain Coffin could see no gain to anybody by his being thrown overboard, while, if he accepted, there might be a chance of getting his vessel back. He did not see how, and he had no plans, but there would be time enough to make them. So he accepted Drew's offer, on condition that he was to be free in his cabin, and that he was not to be compelled to speak to any of them. Drew smilingly agreed to those conditions; and it had been strictly true that he was 'confined to his cabin,' and that he left written instructions on the cabin table every morning. Thereafter, he saw nothing except the view obtained from his stateroom port, and a brief nightly view of the starlit heavens and a wide, dark sea. Drew himself told him where they wanted to go, and he did the rest.

This state of affairs continued until he had navigated, according to instructions, to Amsterdam Island, and had come to anchor there. He knew nothing of what had taken place on the schooner since the mutiny, as he was at all times closely guarded. Then he was told briefly to come along, and was taken ashore with the two other men — both foremast hands — and left there, with nothing but what they had on their persons. Why they did not simply throw all three of them overboard he could not imagine, unless they had had enough

of murder; and why he had been permitted to navigate so long, when they had a competent navigator in Wallet, he did not see. But so it was. No doubt Wallet had been navigator since; the nine months that they had been on Amsterdam. His plans — he had made many — had come to nothing, but what could he have done, and why was the situation not better as it was than it would have been if he had allowed himself to be thrown overboard? Tell him that.

To that Captain Nelson growled assent. 'Where'd you get your flag?' he asked.

Captain Coffin straightened in his chair, and brought his fist down on the table. 'Gorry!' he cried. 'I forgot that flag. I'll have to go ashore and take it down. It's my undershirt.'

'Only one you had?'

''Course. 'D you think I wore two?'

'Cold?'

'Sometimes. But that's nothing, and it's over and done with.'

The two captains sat silent for a while, Captain Coffin gazing out of the cabin window.

'I aimed,' he said at last, 'to wreck her, if nothing better turned up, when we got where there were some people, and my chance would be as good as the next man's. I guess Drew knew it, and thought he'd better get rid of me. I had the Keelings in mind, or Sunda Strait' — he called it Sunday — 'or some parts thereabouts, if the weather turned favorable for wrecking. Pretty bad gales at the Keelings in the season. Well — that's all, I guess. I'd like to come across the Battles again. Maybe I'll be able to get some fast little

schooner, and some kind of a crew, at Batavia, and go after her. I'd spend my last cent on it.'

Captain Nelson grunted again. 'I'd give you a berth here if I had one. Better make up your mind to stay on this ship, Fred, and we'll see what turns up. I'll ship your two men. We're two men short.' Then he told about Smith.

'Good!' cried Captain Coffin. 'Good! Just right, and just like you, Cap'n. I'd have given something to have the chance on the Battles, but there was never a suspicion. Drew was too smart. He's a damned smart man.'

'H'm!' Captain Nelson was noncommittal. 'Now that we're here, we may as well lay in some wood. I'll have the men take down that shirt of yours.'

We were only a day at Amsterdam laying in wood, for we did not really need wood. Our anchor was up the next afternoon and we sailed to the northeast, bound either to Sunda Strait, or for a cruise along the south coast of Java, as circumstances might determine. We had been out about a week, and were getting into more comfortable weather, when I was awakened, very early one morning, by a rumpus on deck. There were shouts, a tramping of feet, and a heavy report, like that of a Spencer gun. My heart jumped up into my throat, I was completely awake, there was that prickling sensation at the roots of my hair, my breath came short and hard, and I found that I was smiling. It was no use, I was always taken that way when any kind of a fight promised. I could no more help it than I could help breathing; not so easily. I scrambled into some clothes and ran up the ladder.

I came out into the gray, melancholy half-light of early dawn. I was conscious of it and of the whispering sea about us. If I had ever contemplated suicide, I am sure it would have been at just that time of day, for that is the time when a man's fortitude is at the lowest ebb, everything looks black, and the future holds no promise. The darkest night is not nearly so bad. That gray loneliness of early dawn is an equally fitting time to choose for going insane, and Mr. Snow seemed to have chosen it for that purpose. He was standing in the same spot that Captain Nelson occupied when he dropped Smith from the yard, and was living over that experience, with himself in the captain's place. A Spencer was in his right hand, the barrel in the hollow of his left arm, and a long, sharp lance leaned against the after house. Now and then he bellowed an order at an imaginary man on the yard, and that was apparently what he had shot at. Spencer bullets, however, are not imaginary, and nothing was to be seen of the men of the watch. They had run forward and taken refuge behind the foremast, the try-works, and anything that offered shelter. I caught a glimpse of one poor fellow who had taken refuge behind the mainmast, almost directly in front of Mr. Snow, and who was trying his level best to make himself small. Mr. Snow did not notice him; did not see him. All his attention was directed to that fore-topsail yard.

Less than half a minute had gone since the report of the Spencer had startled me into full wakefulness. I had my trousers on, but I had not stopped to button them, trusting to one suspender to hold them in place. I had come up the booby-hatch, a very few feet behind

Mr. Snow, and although I was barefoot, I must have made considerable noise; but he was so taken up with his bellowing and flourishing that he did not hear me. I think I might have come through the deck at his very feet and run into him without his being aware of it. I heard quiet stirrings on the cabin ladder and down the booby-hatch, and I knew that the mates and boatsteerers would be on hand in a few seconds; and noises in the cabin told me that Captain Nelson would not be far behind. Mr. Snow's attention had at last been attracted by a movement behind the mainmast — the man there was so scared that he could not keep still — and he raised his rifle. It was like shooting point-blank at the side of a barn. He might easily hit the man, who had not sense enough to keep behind the mast, but kept popping out. I was upon him in one jump, had him about the body from behind, and was grabbing for the rifle.

I was much taller and stronger than when I had tackled Lupo, and Mr. Snow was not the man that Lupo was. Still, I was not prepared for the strength that he showed. Although I succeeded in deflecting the rifle, he managed to discharge it, catching the flesh of my thumb partly under the hammer, making a wound that bothered me for weeks. The bullet ploughed up the deck. Then another pair of arms enveloped him. It was Mr. Macy, and in his arms Mr. Snow was helpless. Then the boatsteerers and the other mates appeared, with the captain just behind them, and I let go my hold and fell back.

Mr. Snow was violently insane, there was no doubt about that. He struggled, shouted, and foamed at the

mouth. They took him below, and he was kept locked in his cabin for two days, but he made such a row there that nobody could get much sleep. On the second day he succeeded in setting fire to his mattress, which made a great smoke and almost smothered him. The fire was put out and he was resuscitated; but Captain Nelson was forced, for the safety of the ship, to put him in irons and remove him from the cabin. I used to hear his cries and shouts for days, issuing from the bowels of the Clearchus somewhere. Finally they stopped, and I was afraid that he had died; but the steward told me that he was only sulking, and would not say a word, or take any notice of him when he carried food to him. I did not blame Mr. Snow for that, and thought it might be a symptom of returning sanity. The steward was a thoroughly obnoxious little pest and had a special animosity toward Mr. Snow for continuing to live and adding to his work. Poor fellow! I refer to Mr. Snow, and not to the steward. What an unhappy time he must have had ever since we left Cape Town!

We were standing to the northeast, for the Keeling Islands, hoping to find some homeward-bound whaler there to which we could transfer our crazy man. Imagine having such a passenger foisted upon you; but nobody seemed to have any doubt that any whaler going home would take him. It seemed to be his only chance — and ours. It was wearing upon the nerves of every one in the ship to hear the noises that he made, and then to have the noises stop. I used to listen for them, and Peter said that the men used to; and the men were highly superstitious, as ignorant sailors are apt to be. I have no shame in acknowledging that I was superstí-

tious myself. The men maintained that nothing but bad luck would come from it, and I found myself of their opinion, although I knew well enough that it was foolish and had no sense or reason in it, unless the very belief of the men should bring on the thing they feared. Nevertheless, I was in suspense — waiting for it.

The bad luck came soon enough. We had got about halfway to the Keelings, and had not seen a single spout. That did not bother Captain Nelson, for I have no reason to think he was expecting to see any; but one afternoon we raised a solitary spout to leeward. We had struck the southeast trades two days before, and were then bowling along merrily, the ship making a great fuss, but not so much headway as anybody would be led to think who did not know her ways. The wind was strong from a little south of east, which made it as nearly close-hauled as was comfortable for the Clearchus, and it was typical trade-wind weather. The whale was about three or four miles off the lee bow when we first saw his spout.

We did not lower at once; indeed, there was doubt whether we should lower at all. I saw Captain Nelson gazing at the spout for a long time, evidently in doubt what to do. Obviously, he hated to lose the time, for he was anxious to get Mr. Snow started home as soon as possible, and any delay might mean that he would miss the ship which otherwise he would catch. I could almost see the arguments which passed through his mind. Captain Nelson was a tender-hearted man under his crust, and I believe his anxiety was entirely for Mr. Snow, and that he was thinking of getting him started home as soon as possible rather than contemplating the

relief it would be to get rid of him. But obviously, too, he was out for whales, and there was one within easy reach; 'she blows and she breaches, and sparm at that,' to quote the immortal classic of Captain Simmons. 'Ile is skeerce, and ile is money.' That settled it. Captain Nelson began to move slowly to and fro, and I knew that we should lower as soon as we got into a favorable position.

Soon after Mr. Snow's collapse Captain Coffin had been offered the fourth mate's berth until there should be something better. He took it at once, like the good sport he was. The two men who came with him relieved the sailmaker and me, so that I was now nothing but cabin boy. I did not like being unceremoniously pushed out of my boat in that way, but there was nothing to do or say about it, so I held my peace, and tried to be contented.

Mr. Baker and Captain Coffin lowered — I suppose I should not speak of him as Captain Coffin now, as he was temporarily fourth mate, and plain Mr. Coffin. The whale was travelling about as fast as the ship, and had not sounded since we had sighted him. There was something a little odd about the way he travelled, but it was nothing very extraordinary, and it was only after we had been watching him for a good while that it was forced upon our attention. It turned out that the whale was blind. Mr. Tilton was the first man to say what was the matter, and it dawned upon him only when he saw how the whale acted while the boats were pulling up to strike.

They approached from the rear, where the whale could not have seen them in any case. Mr. Baker was

to starboard of him, and about a boat's length ahead of Mr. Coffin, who was to port. The wash of the seas under the strong trade wind was enough to nearly drown the noise of the oars, and the men were pulling hard. Mr. Baker was just drawing past the flukes, when the whale seemed to feel that everything was not as it should be. The slow, steady, pumping motion of the flukes ceased, and the great flukes moved from side to side, feeling, as delicately and gently as the antennæ of an insect, for whatever they might find. Mr. Baker pulled ahead, and avoided them. Mr. Coffin tried to avoid them, but could not, for they were just abeam of him, and the men felt the gentle touch upon the keel amidships. At that moment Starbuck planted his first iron near the side fin, and at that touch upon the keel, Miller, knowing instantly that something would happen, hastily seized a harpoon, and darted. The harpoon struck just under the hump. There was no chance for a second iron, for the flukes lifted convulsively, staving in two planks, and rolling the boat over; then came down in a smashing blow upon the water, and the whale started to run.

The men of Captain Coffin's boat were swimming about the wreck. I was watching through my old glass, and counted heads. There was one missing, although I could not tell, at that distance, who it was. Mr. Baker was fast disappearing, to the eastward, in the foaming wake of the whale. Still watching, I thought I saw a head suddenly bob up in the sea behind the whale. I lost it, and, after a long search, I found it again. The man, whoever he was, seemed to be having difficulty in swimming. I dropped the glass to the end of its lanyard,

where it swung and bumped against my chest at every jump, while I ran to tell Captain Nelson. Mr. Brown lowered at once, and went after him.

Mr. Brown was soon back with Captain Coffin, who had torn a tendon in his ankle. He had been caught under his boat when it rolled over, and a tub of line had been emptied over him, entangling him completely. The coils of line were wound about his body, arms, and legs, and the whale was running. He fought desperately to get clear of the line, and thought he was clear, when a bight of the line tightened about his ankle. He was jerked under water when the line came taut, but managed to get hold of the line, pull himself forward, and cut. Captain Coffin was a powerful man, never lost his head, and was resourceful; but most whalemen who survive — and many who do not — are that. He was helped into the cabin, and spent most of the next three weeks with his bandaged ankle up on the lounge there, fretting because he could not return to his duty.

Mr. Brown had made another trip, and brought back the stove boat and its crew. That was a job for Peter. Mr. Baker had gone off dead to windward. It was almost hopeless to stand after him in the Clearchus, but we did so, making short tacks so that he might not lose us. He came back about dark, rather crestfallen, without his whale. After running ten or twelve miles, the whale had sounded out all his line. He waited more than an hour for the whale to come up, in the hope that he could, at least, get hold of the line again; but nothing had been seen of the whale. He must have run for miles under water.

CHAPTER XXVI

We reached the Keelings late in April, having taken no whales since leaving Desolation. Captain Nelson found that the Bartholomew Gosnold had left a few hours before we arrived. This was unfortunate. I have no doubt that the fact made the captain regret more than ever that he had stopped to lower for the blind whale. He had had a boat stove, Captain Coffin had been laid up, he had missed the Gosnold, and he did not get the whale. Still, probably, he would do the same thing again under the same circumstances, and probably he ought to. I was especially sorry that we had missed the Gosnold, for she was going directly home and would have taken letters. It was some months since I had written home, and I had a large instalment of my journal ready to send; but I could send it from Batavia.

For the few days that we were at the Keelings we had exceptionally good weather, and we visited North Keeling Island, which is not often possible. The island is uninhabited except by birds and some other things, among which is a monstrous land crab which climbs trees and feeds on coconuts. Between the coconut palms and ironwood trees there is a dense forest covering the island, which is only about a mile long. We saw literally myriads of frigate-birds, boobies, terns, and other sea-birds, all of which nest there. I was especially interested in the frigate-birds and their nests. The birds would rise from their nests and sail in spirals to great heights, apparently very angry, inflating the red

pouches on their necks as they rose. I was for seeing whether I could not find a few good eggs for my collection, but Peter dissuaded me. He thought that the birds would not take it well. As for my collection of eggs, I had not begun it yet, but I thought that frigate-birds' eggs would be a good thing to begin with.

I still think so, and regret my failure to get an egg or two. No doubt, if I had got them, they would now be adorning the loft of my barn, where various collections of my son's ornament the walls, in various stages of desiccation or decay. There are a collection of eggs, some of them rare; a collection of seaweeds and mosses, dried and mounted on cards, and lettered very beautifully; shells of crabs, likewise mounted on cards, among which are two or three shells of young horseshoe crabs about an inch or two long, very delicate and perfect; a collection of wild-flowers, dried, pressed, and mounted; a collection of lichens; and collections of various other kinds, which I forget at this moment. These collections represent different phases in my son's development which he very promptly forgot as soon as they were past, but each of which was absorbing while it lasted. I do not look at them often, but I would not have them touched, and neither would Ann McKim.

I should have been glad to stay longer, but the voyage was neither for my health, which was disgustingly rugged, nor for my pleasure, and Captain Nelson sailed for Sunda Strait without consulting me. It is not a long stretch from the Keelings to the Strait, but we were delayed and turned aside by whales, of which we saved two, both of which lay fin out within an hour from lowering. They were fairly large, and made more than one

hundred and fifty barrels, and raised our stock of sperm oil on board to about twelve hundred barrels.

We finished our trying-out late one afternoon, and kept off for Sunda Strait, making a beginning at our scrubbing of the ship. We were directly in the track of sailing vessels bound through the Strait to China and Japan, and very nearly in the track of steamers both ways. Sunda Strait is the narrow throat of the highway between the Indian Ocean and all the seas and ports to the east, and it is almost busy enough to need a traffic policeman.

That night was a very dark night; pitch-black, moonless and clouded over, so that there was not even the little light from the stars. The blackness of the night seemed thick, oppressive. I could not catch even a gleam from the water, and it is very rarely the case that you cannot see the water now and then, even on a dark night. It seems much lighter at sea than it does on shore. Everybody aft had turned in, and there was no light showing from the stern ports, for I looked over the stern to see. I could not bring myself to turn in, for I was half afraid, to tell the whole truth, although I do not know what I was afraid of. The thick blackness of the night seemed ominous.

I stood at the stern, looking out over the wake — which glowed dully with swirling phosphorescence — for a long time. Then I wandered forward, and stood under the fore rigging, on the weather side. The wind was fresh, and I heard the noise the Clearchus made going through the water, with an occasional muffled cluck of a block, the regular slatting of some slack rope against a sail, or perhaps the reef points. I looked along

the deck, or where the deck ought to be, and I could see nothing. When Peter and the Prince spoke to me gently, at my shoulder, I very nearly cried out.

If I had not heard the Prince I should not have known he was there. I could see no sign of him. Peter's face was but a dim blur, and nothing of his body was visible. Your true whaleman does not go about his business clad in a natty white duck suit, like a navy sailorman, and with a teacup of a white hat perched upon his head; but he wears old civilian clothes, which look — by daylight — as though they had been boiled in oil, and then, while still wet with it, had been dragged through all the dust of the wharves. Such clothes make him practically invisible on an ordinarily dark night.

In a very low voice that was scarcely more than a whisper, Peter remarked that it was a black night. I agreed with him enthusiastically, and the Prince grunted his assent.

In a few minutes they had faded away into the darkness. I went back to the stern, and stood there for a long time, peering out, but seeing nothing. The silent man at the wheel was some comfort, and once in a while Mr. Tilton, who had that watch, looked in. There was the faint bubbling of the wake, and the same noises as before, but largely cut off by the roof of the house. I had glanced at the compass, which was swung just inside the cabin skylight instead of in a binnacle, and had seen that we were heading due north. That was not sailing very close, but the Clearchus really made more if she was not held too close to the wind. I was getting drowsy in spite of my uneasiness, and was just making up my mind to turn in. In

fact I had taken my elbows from the taffrail, on which I had been leaning, and raised my eyes.

Suddenly, without my being conscious of it, there broke from my throat a yell that would have waked the dead; and there loomed out of the blackness, just at our stern, the flying jibboom of a ship. It was high over my head, and I could just dimly make out jibs rising from it which seemed to reach to the heavens. I had no time to think, but I know I had the impression that our stern was sure to be cut off, and I yelled again. If I had taken time to think I should have realized that that other ship was bound for the Strait, as we were, but sailing a couple of points closer; and that, even if she was going three knots to our one, our chances of escape were good. Hindsight is easy; and when I saw the end of the spritsail yard and some stays within reach of my hand I grabbed them — probably the flying-jib guys — and hauled myself up and landed in her nettings. I was still there when the two vessels came together. The yards of the ship I was on were braced well around, or the damage would have been greater. As it was, the Clearchus had her spanker carried away, and a spare boat brushed off the roof of her after house, and she was given a gentle push on her course. Then she vanished quickly into the night.

The strange ship had apparently put her helm down as soon as it was known that there was danger of a collision, but was just beginning to feel it. A big ship — this ship turned out to be about twice the size of the Clearchus — a big ship like that does not mind her helm instantly, and she had come up perhaps half a point or less when the moment had passed, and the

helm was put up again, bringing her back to her course. I do not believe she would have come up much more in any case, for a moment later showed me that she had everything set, even to studding-sails on the weather side; and having all those sails taken suddenly aback in the breeze that was blowing might have resulted in greater damage — to her, at least — than an actual collision.

I say that a moment later I saw that she had everything set. I was just getting to my feet to feel my way aft, when there was a blinding glare of lightning which illuminated the sea for miles around. It was brighter than day; and the picture of the Clearchus, pegging along on our lee quarter, as though nothing had happened, and of the cloud of sail carried by the ship which carried me, was etched upon my mind with a precision and permanence which permitted examination at my leisure. I found that the Clearchus was unhurt; men at work taking in her spanker, and brailing it, the gaff broken. A spare boat gone, and some splintered woodwork on the starboard corner of the after house were the only evidences.

No burst of rain followed that single flash of lightning, but a crash of thunder, and the giants seemed to be bowling over my head. Then, after a little, threads of lightning began to chase each other over the sky, and soon the sky was covered with an interlacing network, the lines moving incessantly, accompanied by a continuous crackling, like the cracklings in a gigantic frying-pan. The wind had dropped almost instantly, and we lay there, rolling gently in the swell, and flapping that enormous spread of canvas in a flat calm.

It was light enough to see easily where I was going, and I made my way inboard, where I was met by the lookout. He sent me aft to see the officer of the watch, who questioned me briefly. I wanted him to send me aboard the Clearchus at once, but he refused, saying that the breeze might start up again at any moment, and that, with all that spread of sail, they would inevitably leave their boat behind; and that he would not call all hands to reduce sail for anybody. He said that I had come on his ship of my own accord, and if I did not like it I could leave. He would not keep me from going; or a boat could be sent for me from my own ship without much trouble. That was true. I wondered why they did not send for me, for I thought that the man at the wheel had seen me go; but I found out afterward that the man at the wheel had been so completely taken up with other things that he had not noticed my departure, and they had not yet found that I was missing.

While I stood talking with the officer the breeze began to come in again from the same quarter as before. The sails filled gradually, and the ship heeled a little, and began to forge ahead. He would not bother with me any longer, and sent me to the steerage, where there was a spare bunk. By the time I had turned in the breeze had become strong again, the lightning had withdrawn below the eastern horizon, the clouds were breaking, and the ship was doing a good fourteen knots and something to spare.

The ship was the Virginia of London, Marshall, master, last from Mauritius, bound for Hongkong and Canton. I saw Marshall, master, in the morning.

Captain Marshall was a man between thirty-five and forty, clean-shaven when that was less the fashion than it is now; and a man who would take the trouble to shave himself every morning, at sea, would take a great deal more trouble about more important matters. He was a well-set man of above the medium height, with brown hair just beginning to turn gray. I noticed him particularly because he looked enough like Smith to be his brother, except that his eyes were not of that opaque china-blue, but a gray that was alive, and hinted at kindness beneath his crust of silence and sternness. I wondered whether, by any strange chance, he was Smith's brother, and whether he would care to know that we had left his brother sinking into the ooze off Amsterdam.

I did not tell him. He was not a man who invited confidences, but a wonderful master of a ship, if I was any judge. He seemed to know all about me, and about the Clearchus, but that, I suppose, was only inference and good guessing. He told me that I might consider myself a passenger on his ship for two or three days, as he had a full crew; and he told me very particularly what a passenger might do and what he might not. He would land me at Anjer or at Batavia, as I preferred; and he would see my captain, if the Clearchus arrived before he left, and pay for any damage she had suffered. If he did not see Captain Nelson, I was to tell him that the owners of the Virginia would be happy to pay for his repairs if he would send them a bill. Then I was dismissed courteously. I had not said a word during the interview.

I spent the whole of that day on deck, taking a very

simple but an exquisite pleasure in just watching the ship sail. She did it so beautifully! There was a smashing breeze from the southeast, but the Virginia had everything set that she could stand up under, — a cloud of white canvas reaching up and up, apparently without end; she was heeled to her channels, and she *sailed*. It was a revelation to me; the speed, the discipline, which was like that on a war vessel, the continuous attention to little things like trimming in a sheet six inches, the haul on bowlines, until each sail drew without a tremor, pulling and hauling or slacking off a brace by inches, to make the angle exactly what the officer of the deck thought it should be. In the minute attention given to details it was like a continuous yacht race of to-day, but of ten or twelve thousand miles instead of thirty. The men were alive every minute of the time; they jumped at an order, and were satisfied and willing and proud of their ship. Anybody could see that, but who would not be? I had no doubt that there had been many and many a heartbreaking day of setting up and tarring down rigging, slushing masts, reeving ropes, and bending sails, — there must have been, on a ship driven as the Virginia was driven, — but I saw none of it that day. She was almost into port, and it was all done until the next time. The discipline was strict, but sailormen do not object to that. I think that, in their hearts, they like it. They had a man of iron for master, but they had good quarters, good food, and good treatment. There would be no desertions at the next port. And the officers were all proud of the ship and put their best into her. As for Marshall, master, he loved the ship; loved her so well that he

could not bear to see her not looking her best and doing her best.

Until late that afternoon I hung over the weather rail, in the space to which passengers were limited, to use Captain Marshall's words, in a condition of unalloyed bliss. I revelled in the breeze, in the sight of the marching, sunny sea, in the way the ship cut cleanly through the seas, keeping her bows wet with spray, in the crisp commands and the way the men responded to them, in the noises of a ship and the sound of the water, and in the silence. Now and then I lifted my eyes to the towering pyramid of canvas, and I could not help echoing the thought of the sailor quoted by Dana: 'How quietly they do their work!'

Captain Marshall was on deck nearly all day, pacing the deck by the weather rail, but I did not hear him give an order. He scarcely spoke. I think that he was in much the same condition as I. He watched the sea and the sky and the sails, and occasionally he smiled as if he was half ashamed of doing so, but could not help it. On one of these occasions I spoke to him impulsively.

'Captain Marshall,' I said, 'I must thank you for giving me this day. It has been as happy a day as I ever spent.'

He was puzzled at this outburst, and he hardened. 'Just what,' he began coldly, 'do you —'

'The ship,' I interrupted; 'she sails so beautifully! I never expected to have such an experience — never knew there was such to be had.'

He smiled again at that. 'Oh, yes,' he said, 'the ship. She's a sweet sailer — a sweet sailer.' He turned on his heel, still murmuring 'sweet sailer.'

I looked out over the water again, and saw Java Head just rising above the horizon.

Late that night we came to anchor before Anjer, the fourth bay on the right as you go through the Strait from the Indian Ocean. The captain went ashore in the morning, but I did not go with him. I would go on to Batavia. It was just around the corner.

CHAPTER XXVII

At Batavia I stayed on board of the Virginia as long as I could. I had not a cent of money in my pockets, and I did not like to ask help of any kind, even of the American consul. The Virginia had some freight to be unloaded, and I watched the men breaking out that part of the cargo while Captain Marshall went ashore. The captain apparently did not see me that morning, which I suppose was his way of being indulgent. There was a good deal of freight to be taken off, and when it was out of the way there was as much more to be taken in and stowed: great quantities of sugar and coffee and spices for England, and some things for Hongkong and Canton, I could not tell what. I wondered idly why they took aboard the cargo for England on the way east, but I never found out. The officers of the Virginia were not the kind of men one asked idle questions.

The cargo was not all stowed before noon of the next day, and there was no sign of the Clearchus. I was getting very uneasy, and had actually made a move to speak to the captain, when he turned to me.

'Here's your ship,' he said.

I looked down the bay, and saw her upper masts and dirty, slovenly looking sails, appearing indistinctly above the islands. It was a great contrast to the white canvas and shining spars of the Virginia, and I felt a strange mixture of relief and disappointment.

We had to wait for the Clearchus, for the wind was

light, and I thought that she never would get in. Captain Marshall did not wait for her to put her anchor over, but was pulled out and met her, leaving the Virginia with her anchor hove short, her sails loosed and hanging in the clewlines, and the crew standing by to make sail. He went over the side of the Clearchus much more easily and gracefully than I did, and immediately went below with Captain Nelson. To my astonishment, I was hailed as one raised from the dead. It seems that nobody had seen me at the moment of my departure, and I had not been missed until some hours after the collision. Then the man who had been at the wheel recalled my yells, and they concluded that I had been knocked overboard. Of course it was then too late to look for me, as nobody could swim for four or five hours at the rate the Clearchus was going, small as that rate was. I laughed when I heard this explanation, but I made no comment. If they did not know, or had forgotten, that I could not swim at all, I would not bring up a painful subject. Peter and the Prince said nothing, but I was afraid that Peter's smile would crack his leather cheeks.

I was relieved from this embarrassing situation by the return to the deck of Captain Marshall, accompanied by Captain Nelson. Both captains looked pleased, especially Captain Nelson. They stopped for a moment to glance at the damage done, which was trifling, except for the loss of the boat. As this thought crossed my mind I looked up at the roof of the after house. There was no boat missing. They must have picked it up. I asked Peter, and he nodded, saying that it was unhurt. At that moment Peter and the Prince

were called to their duty, and our anchor was let go. I sidled aft, to be within plain sight of Captain Marshall when he left. That was all I could do. He took no notice of me, but disappeared over the side. I was disappointed, and felt a sinking of the heart; but I had no reason to expect anything better. To him I was but one of the crew of the Clearchus, and a whaleman. Smart masters of smart ships have a profound contempt for whalemen as a class, because of their general slackness, I suppose, although those of them who really know feel an equally profound respect for their venturesome spirit. Captain Marshall was the master of the smartest ship I have ever come across, and the condition of his vessel reflected the character of the master, as it always does. The impression I got of Captain Marshall, and the one I always retained, was that of a kind man — if you once got under his stiff crust of reserve and custom. I think that, at heart, he was sentimental, and was afraid that the crust might break and show his real nature. So he never forgot, but took every opportunity to harden and stiffen the crust; and he lavished a wealth of sentiment on his ship in secret.

I found Captain Coffin standing just forward of the house, nursing his bandaged ankle and gazing at the Virginia. I took my stand beside him, and we watched while the Virginia got her anchor up smartly, and got under way smartly, without the smallest mistake or mishap. Her canvas fell into place swiftly and with the precision of a machine, and she was soon well on her way to sea under a veritable cloud of snowy canvas, and going like a race-horse. There was no sound from Captain Coffin until the Virginia was almost out of sight. Then

he heaved a long sigh, and turned to me, almost with tears in his eyes.

'Well, Tim,' he said, with a smile, 'she's a great vessel — a great ship, and as sweet a sailer as I ever saw.'

I grinned in return, from ear to ear. 'That's what Captain Marshall says, sir, and he's just right. I spent one whole day just watching her sail.'

'I'd give a leg,' he said, 'to command a vessel like that. But there's the Annie Battles sailing these seas somewhere. She's almost as good, and she's mine. Help me below, Tim.'

So I lent him my shoulder until he was deposited on the cabin sofa. A glance showed me the same blue-white pitcher on the cabin table, with three empty glasses, and three empty chairs. The pitcher was empty too, and cold, but it had been neither empty nor cold. I knew.

At Batavia we left poor Mr. Snow in hospital, under the charge of the American consul. Although we were sorry for him, there was no one in the ship who was not glad to have him out of it. Soon after we left, a homeward-bound whaler called whose master was willing to take him. He was already better, and recovered pretty well before they reached New Bedford, but he never went to sea again. I remember that I saw him, more than ten years later. I said a few words to him, but found that he did not know me, and I had no wish to recall myself to him. He was night watchman for one or two of the banks then on Water Street, and was a little 'queer,' but not queer enough to prevent his being a good enough night watchman.

We were in Batavia about a week, although I could see no reason for our staying more than a couple of days. The two men that we had picked up at Amsterdam Island with Captain Coffin left us there, and none were shipped in their places, as the old man did not like the looks of any of the candidates. This rejoiced me in particular, for I was practically put back in my boat. It was no cause of rejoicing to the sailmaker, however, for it put him back in his boat too; but Captain Nelson, I believe, expected to pick up a man or two later on.

We made for the Japan grounds as straight as we could with the northeast trades directly ahead.

We stood in fairly close to Formosa, and in that neighborhood we got one whale, a lone bull, which made no fight to speak of, although it was not like slaughtering a steer at Green's or Pike's. A pot of hot oil from him may have saved us; or, at any rate, it may have saved us a nasty fight. While we were trying-out, a small junk appeared from the direction of Formosa or the Chinese coast beyond. Nobody gave it a thought until it was close aboard, when it suddenly occurred to Captain Nelson, who happened to be on deck, that its actions were suspicious. I saw nothing suspicious about it except that it was almost near enough to throw a biscuit aboard — if anybody had wanted to waste a biscuit. The old junk was going along after the manner of junks, with six or seven men loafing on deck. We were hove to, and a great volume of black smoke was pouring from our try-works. As far as working the ship was concerned, we were helpless. If they wanted to board us, they could do it a dozen times over before we could get the Clearchus going.

Captain Nelson watched the junk for a minute, then he spoke to Mr. Baker, who went at once among the men. The men left their work, and armed themselves with lances, harpoons, spades, and boarding-knives, but did not range themselves along the rail, for the captain was not sure, and he did not want to make himself a laughing-stock among other captains. I was watching the men, feeling little pricklings all over and my hair rising. Captain Nelson turned to me.

'What 'you grinning about, Tim?' I had not been aware that I was grinning, but I was, from ear to ear. 'Get the guns and revolvers from the cabin.'

'All of them, sir?' I asked, my voice shaking with excitement.

'All you can carry.'

I jumped for the cabin stairs, and clanked up again, making a noise like an arsenal. The captain could not help laughing to see me. I had the Spencers, of course, three of the heavy bomb guns, two revolvers, and some ammunition. I distributed my arsenal among the officers.

'Here she comes,' said Mr. Baker — with satisfaction, I thought.

The junk had gone by us, until she was almost directly to windward, had turned, and was coming down before the wind, her men, who had been hidden below, swarming out upon deck. They were armed mostly with long knives.

I looked at our own men. They were taking their places at the rail according to their nature; some slowly, some quickly. I saw Peter go with business-like rapidity, and take his place by the fore rigging. He had

a boarding-knife. The Prince, with a harpoon in his hand, and two more leaning against the rail at his side, leaped upon the rail beside Peter. I ran to Peter's other side, seizing a boarding-knife as I ran, and there we were, the three of us together, the Prince, Peter, and I. Peter took it all quietly, as if it were a regular part of his duty to meet a junk-load of Chinese pirates; I was a little afraid, I think, but at the same time I was pleased, and I was wildly excited; and the Prince stood on the rail, looking down with the utmost contempt upon the Chinese. He was stripped to the waist — most of our men were half-stripped — and looked like an ebony statue, the gold hoops in his ears shining out against his shining black skin.

The junk was very near now, and one of their men crawled up with a great bronze hook on the end of a cable. He was going to try to hook fast to us, but he never did make the trial. He had to rise, for a moment, and expose himself. That moment was enough for the Prince, who was directly opposite him, and only a few feet away. The Prince raised his harpoon, and darted quickly. The sharp weapon struck the man full in the chest, went clean through him as if his body had been made of paper, and the barbs stuck a good three inches behind his back.

The Prince smiled at that. 'Ha!' he cried. 'You want come aboard? Come on, then.'

He jerked the body over the rail of the junk, and it fell with a thud against our side. Then, still standing erect, he hauled it over our rail, and dumped it on the deck at my very feet. It turned me sick and faint for an instant.

I was roused out of my faintness by a shout from Kane, who had been standing not far from me. He threw down his spade, ran to the try-works, seized one of the long-handled copper dippers, and dipped it into one of the kettles of oil. The oil was unusually hot, and the drops that fell from the dipper, as he ran back with it, smoked fiercely, and threatened to start fires.

'Look out, boys!' he shouted, swinging his dipper of hot oil. 'I'll give them a drink.'

We drew away from the swing of the dipper. With a last swing at the full length of the long handle he let them have it.

'Have a doughnut,' he roared, 'you dhirty chinks!'

He had thrown with all his strength, and with considerable skill, so that the contents of the dipper were dashed upon a good many of the men, and scattered into drops. The drops fell upon the bare bodies like a rain of fire, and every drop sizzled where it struck, literally frying the Chinese in spots. There was a yell from our men at Kane's success, and frenzied yells of pain came from the junk. Kane had turned at once, and ran back to fill his dipper again. Many men followed him, to grab whatever they could lay hands upon which would hold oil.

I was among the first to turn and run, thrusting my boarding-knife into Peter's hands, and bidding him hold it. The decks, of course, were almost swimming in oil and greasy dirt, as we had been in the middle of trying-out. As I ran I heard a shout from Peter to duck. At the same instant I fell flat upon my face on the deck, and a long knife whistled over my head, striking against the bricks of the try-works. It was a

piece of good luck, with no effort of mine contributing. I had merely stepped in a puddle of oil, and my foot had slipped.

By the time I had got to my feet again, there was nothing left to dip the oil with, and I went back to my post beside Peter. Kane had thrown a second dipperful of oil, with as great success as the first, and there was now a continuous shower of hot oil crossing the widening gulf between the vessels. The junk had given up the attempt to board us, and was only anxious to get away, her men pushing with long poles, while exposing their bodies as little as possible. The junk slowly dropped astern, helped by much pushing and some drifting. As she had come down upon us from the windward, she could not get off directly; but the Clearchus was forging ahead a little.

Hot oil was showered upon the junk while she was within range of the men, but the officers, their guns held ready, withheld their fire, and at last she cleared us. As she cleared our stern, and her sails filled and she stood to leeward, her men were still shouting in agony, some of the worst burned clawing at their bodies. Presently a man jumped overboard. He sank from sight, and I did not see him come up again. Then another jumped, and another; and then two together. All four came up again, but the junk made no attempt to pick them up, and the men made no attempt to swim, so far as I could see. They just lay there, bobbing on the surface or under it, now in plain sight, now out of sight, until they disappeared.

We had made no move to pick them up, which worried me somewhat, and finally I spoke to Mr.

Baker, who passed near. Two of the Chinese were still afloat.

'Aren't we going to pick up those men, Mr. Baker?'

'What men?' he asked. 'Any of our men overboard? Don't seem so. If any of those yellow pirates are overboard, the junk can pick 'em up if she wants to. What we do is the Cap'n's business, not yours or mine, Tim.'

I looked at Captain Nelson. He was standing under the after house, gazing forward absently, as if nothing had happened. *He* did not see any men overboard, nor did Mr. Baker, nor any other of the officers. At that moment Captain Nelson called me, and I went to him.

'Take the guns below,' he said.

When I came up there was nothing to be seen except a junk, a quarter of a mile to leeward, going before the wind.

CHAPTER XXVIII

When we got to the New Zealand grounds we began at once the regular routine of cruising, but saw no whales for three days. The weather was boisterous, as it was apt to be while we were on those grounds. We raised a lone spout, very full and powerful, on the lee bow. The whale was not feeding, but was coming to windward, and we lowered three boats at once, Mr. Brown's, Mr. Macy's, and Captain Coffin's. Captain Coffin was hardly in condition yet to be of the most service, but he was so eager to go that Captain Nelson let him. All three boats pulled out ahead of the whale to cut him off, and waited. When we first sighted the spout it was above three miles distant, the whale swimming in a business-like way and making five or six knots. We had plenty of time, therefore, to get into good positions, and we drifted down before the wind directly upon his course.

As he was approaching us head on, and as we were drifting without the use of sail or oars — although the men had their oars in their hands and held them in place, ready to use — there was nothing to give the whale warning of our presence, and he came on quite unalarmed. When he was a short distance away, he changed his course slightly, and it looked, for some seconds, as though he would hit the boat, head on, but Mr. Brown laid the boat around a bit, and we pulled a couple of strokes. The next moment his old head, like a cliff of black granite, weather-seamed and scarred, rose

just beyond the bow oar. He spouted and pitched under like a flash; but the Prince drove one iron into him just above the fin. There was no chance for the second. The boat whirled around quickly, and we were off, with the thrashing flukes almost abeam. The next spout was thin blood.

The Prince and Mr. Brown changed places, and Mr. Brown called to us to pull him up close so that he could put in another iron. No sooner had we dropped our oars and laid hold of the line to pull, than the whale milled short around, brought his nose accurately to the stem of the boat without giving Mr. Brown a chance, and pushed us fast astern. It was a delicate job for the Prince to hold us straight with the steering oar, and not to let the boat swing around broadside, but for a boat length he did it. Mr. Brown, during that time, was pushing with all his strength on the harpoon, the sharp point against the whale's rubber-like snout, but the barb did not enter.

We heard and saw the whale's jaw snap up twice, but of course it did not reach the boat. He spouted, sending the acrid vapor, thinly mixed with blood, over us, setting us all to choking, and almost turning me inside out. Then he withdrew a little, and lay there wallowing in the seas, snapping his jaw, and snapping his spout-hole with loud cracks. Sperm whales can snap the spout-hole, which is shaped much like the *f*-hole of a violin, with tremendous force. Meanwhile he was eyeing us with a malevolent eye, and no wonder.

The other boats were coming up; they were nearly there. Mr. Brown thought he saw a chance, and ordered us to pull up close. We did, and the whale

still lay there wallowing. We grounded on his back, and Mr. Brown pumped his lance up and down twice. There was no time for more, for the whale went down suddenly, with a flourish of his flukes, barely missing us. He did not go deep, however, for while we were watching the line and the sea, he floated up under us, belly up, with his jaw almost at right angles with his body. There was no time to escape. That jaw came down with a quick snap, cutting the boat cleanly in two between the tub- and the after-oar, spilling the men into the sea, and getting a tubful of line entangled in his teeth. I saw him spout thick blood just as I went over, clinging to my oar.

When I had come to the surface, and had cleared the water out of my eyes, the whale was trying to get rid of that tub of whale line. I could hardly help laughing, although my situation was not one for laughter, the whale reminded me so strongly of a person who had got a mouthful of hair, or of the bristles from an old tooth-brush. He seemed to feel almost the same disgust. The two other boats, coming up, were almost at his flukes, and the ship had come very near. The whale caught sight of her, and instantly made for her with a vigor unexpected in a whale that spouts thick blood. The ship was broadside on, and her sails were already aback, so that she could do nothing. The whale struck her with his head amidships. If he had been merely angry, and not hurt, that butting might very well have been a catastrophe for us. But the vigor with which he had started had ebbed rapidly away, and his butt was feeble, although I saw the upper masts quiver, and the masthead man was rattled about like a die in a box.

Then he drew off and rammed again. That second attempt was more feeble yet. He could do no more than rub against the hull; and he passed under her, and floated to the surface on the other side, fin out, with no flurry, unless his feeble buttings had been his flurry.

Mr. Macy and Captain Coffin were picking us up. The tub-oarsman was found floating amid the wreckage, his arm over his oar, unconscious. He did not recover consciousness for an hour, but then seemed to be all right. He must have been hit on the head by something, nobody could guess what. They would have thought it the teeth of the whale, except that the lower jaw, which contains all the teeth, is too narrow to reach both the tub- and the after-oarsmen; and Black Man'el was again severely mauled by the teeth of the whale, on the same side that was so recently healed. This time it was not his arm, but his back. On that ebony surface there were three or four bloody wipes, where the teeth had ripped it in the process of closing. Black Man'el, however, did not miss a day's duty on account of it, taking his regular place in the boat when it was called away, although his back must have been lame and sore for days.

That whale made eighty-five barrels. As I was watching the mates cutting off the head, Peter stopped for a moment beside me.

'He's a scarred old lad,' he said, 'isn't he, Timmie? Do you see the marks of teeth he's carried around for many a year?'

I did see them; old scars of the teeth of some other bull, running up diagonally from his mouth. That other

bull must have bitten deep, for each tooth-mark was separate, and still formed a little hollow, like the little weathered hollows in a rock, where water gathers, or the regular marks of a drill. There were other scars, too, of wounds where the teeth seemed to have ripped and torn their way viciously.

'How do they get those scars, Peter? Fighting, I suppose; but how do they fight?'

'I've never seen them fighting, lad. But those who have seen it tell me that they draw off from each other a little way, and go at each other full tilt. They turn on their side, like, to give their jaws play, and bite and wrench and tear. Sometimes they'll use their jaws like fencing foils, without drawing off; but however they do it, they must be savage at it. If they fence, they don't wear masks.'

'Shall we see fighting whales, Peter?'

He smiled. 'We may see 'most anything, lad. It's hard to tell. I've never seen 'em, but perhaps my turn is due for that this voyage.'

I wished fervently that we might see it. I watched for it with new interest, and whenever we raised a pod I hoped that they might take it into their heads to fight — fight among themselves, not us. I told Peter of my hope one day.

'Bless your heart, lad,' he said, unsmiling, which was good of him, 'they won't fight. They're in the same school. Wait until you see a schoolmaster take on a fellow of about the same size that's trying to get his job. Then you may see it.'

It was now past the middle of the season, and we put into Wellington to fill our water-casks, to give the men a

run ashore, and to get our mail. There was no mail for me, but I sent home another instalment of my journal, and I saw the town, which had little interest for me. There was only one town which I cared about seeing, and that was more than a year away, almost exactly on the other side of the world. I had a great desire to see at least one of the Marquesas Islands, but Wellington is not the Marquesas.

When we got back to our cruising grounds, whales were getting scarce and wild and difficult of approach. The big whales seemed to have gone. We did get one forty-barrel bull, one of a small school that was running to leeward from another ship. We saw the ship in the distance, and we saw her boats; but the whales were running faster than the boats could go. Our one bull we intercepted, but the rest ran away from us, straight to leeward, head out. It was useless to chase them. The strange boats did not get nearer to us than a mile and a half; then they gave it up, and went back to their ship, which bore away to the southward without an attempt to speak us

Captain Nelson must have made up his mind very suddenly to get out of those waters. As soon as the trying-out of the forty-barrel bull was finished we stood away to the northward, for the Ellices, Gilberts, and Kingsmill; but most of all, I thought, to find those mysterious grounds where the Apollo had filled up. Just after we had filled away, Peter found me, and pointed in silence to the horizon. There was a faint haze, but I made out a pair of top-masts, with yards on them.

'A brig?' I asked, with but faint interest.

'A schooner,' Peter answered. 'I saw her from aloft.'

It dawned upon me then; it was the Battles, going the same way we were. I watched her draw away from us. Then I saw Captain Coffin watching, too.

CHAPTER XXIX

As we ran to the northward, we had the wind on the beam or aft of that, most of the time, usually brisk to strong, as fair a wind as we could have wished for. The hurricane season was about to begin. Hurricanes are most frequent in March and April, although occasionally there is a severe one toward the last of February; and their tracks most commonly cross the Fiji or Samoan Islands in a general southerly direction, then curving more and more to the eastward. We stood well to the west of Fiji, and were past the Ellices before the end of the southern summer, so that we escaped them entirely — if there were any — and were usually running about as fast as the old Clearchus was able, under the southeast trades, and under a regular trade-wind sky.

It was seldom necessary to touch a brace or a halliard, and our crew had very little to do. The mastheads were kept manned, but I soon came to the conclusion that that was done merely as a matter of form, or from habit, and not for any practical purpose, for we raised spouts on two occasions on our way up without lowering or even changing the course. Each time Captain Nelson came on deck, looked at the spoutings for a couple of minutes, and turned away without saying anything. And each time Mr. Baker asked him, 'Lower, sir?' rather wistfully, and the old man shook his head, and went below again. I did not know what to make of it, and Mr. Baker did not seem to know either. He appeared to be dumb-

founded — completely flabbergasted — and he looked after the captain, and, on the second occasion, I heard him mutter that he'd be eternally damned to hell-fire, or words to that effect — with sundry embellishments — if he knew what the captain was up to. I made up my mind that the idea of finding the mythical Apollo island obsessed him. We had over two thousand barrels on board, and needed only three or four hundred to fill us up. Think of the disappointment of finding a gold mine, with nowhere to put the gold! Easy money, for the mere picking up, and no way of carrying it off.

One morning I was standing by the rail, Captain Coffin pacing the deck behind me, although it was not his watch. I should not speak of him as Captain, for he was not captain on the Clearchus, although I suppose still captain of the Battles. We had run out of the trades, and we were trying to make an easterly course, but we were not making out very well. We had frequent showers, some of which were almost of the proportions of deluges; and calms and light airs from any point of the compass about a quarter of the time. When the wind did come, it was mostly ahead, and we made little progress. On the night before this morning, I remember, there was a great deal of phosphorescence in the water. The ship was scarcely moving, but the little ripples at her bow glowed brightly; her wake was a luminous road, stretching out far astern, every whirl and eddy a vortex of living light. I saw a shark clearly outlined in greenish light, and a sudden burst of fireworks at a little distance showed where a school of flying fish had been disturbed and driven from the water like the balls of a roman candle.

I was thinking of those flying fish as I stood by the rail that morning, and I had brought my old battered glass along. It was a calm morning, hot and sticky, the sea fairly quiet. Suddenly I saw what I thought must be a school of flying fish break the water about a quarter of a mile away and take their flight. They looked too big for flying fish, their flight in the air too short, and I brought my glass to bear. I soon caught them again, and they certainly did not look like fish, but I was not ready to believe they were what they looked like. I turned to Captain Coffin, and asked him.

He stopped by my side, waving the glass away when I offered it to him. The creatures soon appeared again, coming out of the water in a spurt or gust.

'Oh,' he said, 'flying squid.'

'But,' I asked, 'do squid fly?'

He laughed. 'No,' he said, 'no more than flying fish fly — nor so much. As you see. There must be something chasing them.'

At this moment the musical, quavering cry of the Admiral came down to us: 'Bl-o-o-ows!'

The spout was dead to windward, about five or six miles off. I, at any rate, could not see it from the deck, even with my glass, there was such a quiver of heated air at the horizon. Captain Nelson came on deck, went up to the main crosstrees, and stayed there for some time, watching. When he came down Captain Coffin asked him what he made of it.

'Can't make out,' he answered. 'Something queer going on. May be swordfish, or perhaps those big sharks; or killers, except for the latitude. We'll stand up that way as fast as we can.'

'Lower, sir?' Mr. Baker asked, knowing well what the answer was likely to be.

Captain Nelson shook his head. 'Not yet.'

It took us a long time to get up anywhere near, but the spout remained very nearly stationary, and there was considerable white water raised about it. The light breeze, nearly dead ahead, died out, and we wallowed there for a quarter of an hour, in a flat calm. But we were near enough to see what was going on, and I watched through my glass. There were two whales instead of one, very different in size. The smaller of the two seemed to be the centre of the commotion, and I caught several glimpses of bodies, gleaming brightly as they broke the surface for an instant. There must have been five or six of them, but I could not tell certainly whether they were sharks or swordfish or what. I had never seen a killer. The larger whale was making short, savage dashes at the attacking fish, but without any marked result, so far as I could see.

I handed the glass to Captain Coffin. 'Won't you look, sir, and tell me what they are?'

'I don't really need the glass, boy,' he said, 'to tell me that they're sharks.' But he took it, and held it to his eyes. 'Sharks; big devils, twenty-five or thirty feet long. That whale's a small cow, and she must have a small calf under her fin. That's what the sharks are after, and they'll get it, too, if we don't get a breeze pretty quick.'

Small difference it could make to the whale what got it! They were still keeping up the fight vigorously when a cooler breath came out of the southeast. It was only a puff, but soon there was another, which lasted longer; and before many minutes the breath of cooler air was

steady, and growing stronger. We were just on the northern edge of the southeast trades, and had edged into them, or they had passed us, which amounted to the same thing. Captain Nelson had been edging to the southward for some days, with just that in view.

We gathered way again, and when we had got near enough, Captain Nelson ordered Mr. Baker and Mr. Brown to lower. The order he gave, however, reduced Mr. Baker to a stupefied silence.

'I don't want you should hurt the whales,' he said quietly, as if it were the most natural thing in the world for a whaler not to want to hurt whales. 'Drive off those sharks, and kill them if you can. I'm going to try to keep those spouts in sight,' he went on, probably thinking that some explanation was necessary, or his mates might think he was losing his mind. 'I'm going to keep those spouts in sight, and see if they don't lead us to something worth while.' And he turned away, muttering that it should be hereabouts if it was anywhere.

We lowered, and pulled hard for the scene of combat. It was full time, for the cow was bitten and torn in many places, and could not have kept up the fight much longer. The larger whale — a bull, I thought — seemed about ready to give it up, and take himself off. There were six of the big sharks, but one of them was so badly hurt by one of the whales that he could barely drag himself off, and all of them had been marked. The insensibility of sharks to pain or injury is an extraordinary thing. This one had been cut nearly in two, but he had kept up the fight, his viscera trailing behind him in a long festoon, until one of the others had relieved him of them. The other sharks did not molest him further,

being too intent on getting the more delicate morsel, which we could see by the side of its mother. Nearly the whole of one side of its flukes had been bitten off, and it was somewhat torn in several places, although not seriously injured.

We put the sharks to flight, killing three, after one of them, in his thrashings, had got his tail into the boat, and wiped me across the cheek. It was like a wipe with a rasp, or coarse sandpaper, and took the outer skin completely off my right cheek. It was a long time in healing, and I had to be at my duties for nearly a month, with half my head tied up as if I had the tooth-ache.

The whales were going, swimming slowly, probably because of the injuries to the cow, and to the reduced speed of the calf, owing to the loss of one fluke. The bull was at some distance, but he seemed to regulate his speed by that of the cow. We got back to the ship, one side of my face a mass of blood, and blood which had dripped into my shirt. I must have been a frightful-looking object. Such a hurt makes a great show, and always looks much worse than it is. I do not remember that I felt anything more than the inconvenience of it, and of having my head tied up for so long. Nobody thought it necessary to put anything on it — iodine or alcohol, or anything of the kind. I drew a bucket of sea-water, and washed most of the blood off, but that was all.

We stood off at once after the whales. Fortunately, they did not swim directly to windward, and the ship was able to make the course, and to keep up with them. They seemed to be making for some definite place, and

at nightfall we were not far behind them. Even Mr. Baker appeared to think that the old man knew what he was about. We reduced sail for the night, although it could have been no better than a guess on Captain Nelson's part how far he should reduce speed. With the first gleam of light — a little before six o'clock, or four bells, for we were not many degrees south of the equator — our best men were sent to the mastheads. Our best lookout was the Admiral, a Kanaka. There were no spouts to be seen. We had lost the whales. Sail was crowded on, and the Clearchus was soon making good speed under the steady trades, which had grown much stronger since the day before.

We held on the course on which we had been sailing nearly three hours. Then the Admiral's quavering cry came down to us, for he was the first to see it.

'Ah bl–o–o–ows!'

It was a musical cry, but given with indifference. He had seen too many spouts to become excited over two and a half; for he had detected the little spout of the calf, close alongside its mother. There was no doubt that there was our quarry, although still miles away. We kept on after them, and continued to gain slowly, for another hour, the officers keeping an eye on the spouts, which we could now see from the deck, and occasionally glancing up at the Admiral. We had had breakfast, and I was doing the same thing as the officers, from my perch on the heel of the bowsprit. Suddenly I saw the Admiral straighten up. He looked far out ahead as if he could not believe his eyes. Then he gave an excited cry.

'Bl–o–ws! Ah bl–o–ws!' It was not as musical as we

were used to hear from the Admiral. 'Blows! Big school! Hunnud whale! All over!' And he waved his arm to include a wide arc.

I could not see the new spouts, of course, from my place on deck, and I sprang into the fore rigging, clasping my old glass, which I had brought up with me after breakfast. Many others of the men swarmed up, but I was first, and I went rapidly up as far as I could get, and put the glass to my eyes.

I did not see them at first, for it was about four bells — ten o'clock in the forenoon — I was looking to the eastward, directly into the glare, and I was expecting to see them nearer than they were; but at last I saw them.

The large school of whales did not seem to be going anywhere in particular as a body, although the individuals of the school continually moved about, or sounded, or came up again. They may have been feeding. The bull and the wounded cow and calf which we had been chasing were evidently meaning to join the school, and we followed them, getting all the boats ready for lowering as we went. We were now getting the full sweep of the trades, steady and strong, and we gained on the three whales, so that we were in a position to see well what happened when they neared the school.

A big bull swam out from the school to inspect the newcomers. He was not old and scarred, as most of the lone whales were, but as big as any of them, and in his prime. Although we were not far off, that means perhaps half a mile; and as but little of the whales was out of water, I could not see with any certainty what went on. The big bull at once joined the cow, and swam beside her for some distance, apparently trying to per-

suade her to leave her lord and come with him; an unnecessary proceeding, as that was just what she was doing. He seemed to pay no attention to the calf. It was no concern of his. The cow swam on, and took no notice of him, so far as I could see, but the other bull did not like it. He was not so very much smaller than the big one, and before I realized that there was anything on the programme, here he was, coming for the big bull, fire in his eye, I could imagine, and jaw dropped. When he was a hundred feet away, he turned over, nearly on his back, apparently, for I saw his jaw projecting above the surface of the water.

The big bull was aware of the other just in time to slip out of the way, but not in time to escape entirely. The jaw closed on his small, and I saw the wounds made by the teeth, which tore out great pieces of blubber and flesh. By what seemed agreement, the two big whales turned about as soon as they could and went at each other full tilt. Their jaws locked, and they wrestled there for a minute, each seeming to try to break the jaw of the other, and tearing and thrashing the water into boiling fountains of spray. As we found out later, great gobs of flesh were torn from the sides of their heads. After a while they broke their hold, I could not see how, and they backed off and went at it again.

This time the fight was fiercer than before, and it was impossible to see what was happening, or to see anything but white water. This round was a little longer than the first. The performance was repeated two or three times, and then I saw the boiling white water gradually become quiet. The two great bodies lay there for a few seconds, head to head; then the smaller of the

whales moved off slowly away from the school. He seemed to have lost all interest in the cow, and the bigger one, satisfied that the other had definitely given up the fight, let him go in peace. Both whales seemed to be in distress. I saw the big one, as he swam to join the school, raise his head completely out of water two or three times, and his jaw seemed to be slewed around so that it would not close properly. He had difficulty in moving it at all.

Up to this point it had not seemed to be a propitious time for lowering, but when the fight was over, Mr. Tilton lowered at once, and went after the vanquished bull. He was still moving slowly, and the boat easily overtook him, and got fast. He made no fight at all, but lay fin out in fifteen minutes. His jaw was hanging down queerly, and when we got him alongside and began to cut-in, we found that it had been broken short off, and was hanging by the flesh. Many of his teeth were stove out, and he had terrible wounds in the head.

Meanwhile the ship had kept off after the school, which began to show signs of moving along. We got pretty near it, however, and lowered three more boats, but we did not succeed in getting whales of any size. The school consisted principally of rather small cows, under the charge of two or three bulls as schoolmasters. We could not find the bull which had been fighting, and did not look for the others, for schoolmasters are always pugnacious devils. They have to be. We managed to get three small cows of about twenty barrels apiece before the school was well under way and left us. One of these cows was lost during the night, stripped by sharks and broken adrift, and much of another fell a

prey to the sharks. Four whales at once alongside is almost too much to take care of. We got the blubber all hove in by sunset of the next day, and the carcasses cut adrift. They made only a hundred and twelve barrels altogether, only about as much as we might have expected to get from one really big whale in those waters.

CHAPTER XXX

As soon as the trying-out was finished, we stood off to the southeast, or a little southerly of that. The trades here were blowing strong from the east, and that was as close as the Clearchus would sail. After a day of this, we came about on the other tack. We could none of us understand why, unless some of the officers did, but the large school of whales had disappeared almost directly to windward, and Captain Nelson may have been trying to see where they had gone. There was a fairly rapid drift of the surface water, also from the east, as would be expected. Although I knew practically nothing about it, I had formed the theory that whales generally travelled against the warmer ocean currents. I had not carried my theory so far as to account for their doing so, but I supposed it had to do with the food supply. That seems reasonable now, for it is at the bottom of all migrations; not comfort, nor pleasure, but food, and the ease of getting it.

We did not see that school again, but early in the morning of the second day, being then in longitude 162° W., latitude 8° S., by the captain's — and my own — observations, we came upon three islands. They were very small islands, roughly about a mile long and half a mile wide, each a sort of crescent, and forming, as I now think, parts of the rim of a crater but recently elevated above the surface. They were not shown on any of our charts, and could not have been exposed to the sun and winds and waves for many

years, for they were almost utterly bare; perhaps a hundred feet high at the highest point, and showing nothing but rock and dried mud and ooze from the bed of the sea. We did not land on them, but at only one place could I make out with my glass a spot of green, and that was only about a couple of feet square. Possibly some bird had dropped a seed there, or a cocoanut had drifted ashore, or the seeds of beach grass in a mass of drifting seaweed. Beaches had begun to form, especially on the windward side.

The captain having satisfied himself about the waters, we began cruising for whales in earnest, for we had seen a couple of pods earlier in the day. We had almost sunk the islands below the horizon before we raised another spout. While we were in this neighborhood a day rarely passed without our seeing any. There were two spouts this time. We worked the ship to windward of them, and lowered three boats, leaving Mr. Tilton and Captain Coffin aboard the ship. Before we reached them, the whales sounded, without having seen us, and we waited, tossing on the seas, for them to rise.

When we had waited for nearly an hour, they suddenly spouted near Mr. Baker and Mr. Macy, at the other end of the line from us. We had not seen them rise. All three boats started for them. We had a long way to go, and it was hard pulling, for the sea was heavy. The ship was well to windward, and the whales had spread out. None of us could see what was going on ahead of us, but we were putting our last ounce of strength into pulling — at least, I was — when Mr. Brown told us to take it easy, for they had sounded again. I was glad that they had shown so much sense.

Those whales kept up that sort of thing for five risings, always working to windward slowly, and the ship working to windward ahead of us. It got to be nearly sunset, and the ship showed a little white flag at her peak, recalling us. We did not know it, however, as we were keeping head to the sea, and the ship was behind our backs. Mr. Brown knew it. At that moment one of the whales rounded out directly astern, and head on. As it was a good chance, Mr. Brown ignored the signal, heaving on the steering oar, and laying the boat around.

'Now,' he said, 'a dozen good strokes, boys.'

We gave him a dozen, and then a dozen more. He nodded to the Prince, who took in his oar swiftly and silently, and stood up. The black head of the whale shot by, and Mr. Brown threw all his weight on the oar, bringing the boat's head around.

'Give it to him!' he cried. 'Stern all!'

The Prince had darted; he threw his second iron just as we bumped terrifically into the body of the whale. Then we backed off as the flukes went into the air, came down on the surface thunderously, and swept from side to side. Again his flukes went up, and the whale sounded. He sounded at great speed and the line whistled out of the tub. I confess that I was afraid of it as the coils writhed past my hands and pounded a tattoo on my oar. One tub was out. There had been no time for Mr. Brown and the Prince to change places, and a 'drug' was being bent on to the end of the line in the second tub, as fast as the men could work. It was no sooner fast than it was whisked out of their hands and overboard.

Mr. Brown smiled slowly. 'Well,' he said, 'that was

soon settled. Looks as if the joke was on us. Guess we'd better have let him alone.'

The whale had gone off with two irons, two tubs of line, and a drug. The chance was that we should never see any of them again, for it was almost too dark to see anything, and it would be pitch-black in half an hour. We turned and pulled easily toward the ship, which was showing a light, two miles to windward. The boat lanterns were set before we had gone far.

We had made perhaps half the distance to the ship when we heard, out of the darkness ahead, shouts and commands and a commotion in the water, that was more than the wash of the sea. Mr. Brown peered ahead.

He could not make out much. 'Stand up, Tony,' he said, 'and see what you make it. By the sounds it's Mr. Baker, and he's fast.'

The Prince stood up. Those black men have a strange faculty of seeing in the dark. He reported that it was Mr. Baker fast to a whale, and he thought it was our whale.

By this time we were almost up with the commotion. Mr. Brown headed us over that way, and we pulled harder. As soon as we were within hail he called out, asking if the whale had irons in him. I could not see what the state of affairs was, for I had to keep my eyes astern; but I judged from the sounds that Mr. Baker was close alongside, and was lancing, or just about to. The answer was that the whale had irons in him.

'Those irons are mine,' Mr. Brown shouted, 'and I want to kill him!'

I was surprised, for I did not see then, and I do not see now, why it should be any pleasure to a man like Mr.

Brown to pump a lance up and down in the in'ards of a whale. If it had been Mr. Baker I could have understood it.

Between grunts and curses Mr. Baker replied that it was too late, for he had just attended to that matter, and we had better go astern a little, as the whale was going into his flurry.

Mr. Brown said nothing — there was nothing to say — and the whale proceeded to turn fin out without any flurry at all.

Mr. Baker then set his lights to signal the ship, and she bore down upon us. It was a long, hard job getting that whale alongside in the pitch darkness and the heavy sea, and it was not done and the men on board until very late in the evening. Even then it was not done, we found. Lying hove to, as we were, the ship forging ahead a little, with a very heavy sea running, she would bring up, at every roll, with a tremendous jerk on the fluke chain. At last the chain parted — shackle pin snapped — and the carcass began to drift away. It was Mr. Macy's watch, and he sprang quickly into the quarter boat, bent the line to an iron, and struck as the body drifted beneath him. He checked it with the line, and managed to get another iron in, fast to a second line, before it had drifted out of reach. Then the lines were paid out to their whole length, and the spring of the lines held the carcass until sunrise. In the morning we had all our work to do over again, but we got the blubber hove aboard before sunset. The whale made sixty-five barrels.

We finished our trying-out without seeing any more whales, but before the cleaning-up was more than begun, we raised a lone spout. We lowered three boats

for him, but mine was not among them, and I watched the proceedings through my glass. They caught up with him about a mile from the ship. Perhaps it is more exact to say that he caught them there, for he attacked the first boat as soon as he got a sight of it, driving at it at once with his mouth open. It was Mr. Baker's boat, and Starbuck had no chance to do anything, for the whale went a little under, a short distance from the boat, came up under it, belly up, and like lightning, and caught it fairly forward of amidships. He came up so hard that he carried it into the air, bow first, and the men all fell out. Then he gave it a little shake, as a terrier shakes a rat, but he did not close hard, although he sprung all the planks. The boat then slipped out of his jaws and into the water, where it lay for a few moments, leaking like a sieve.

The whale nosed about among the débris, butting the boat from side to side, cutting with his flukes at every floating thing that touched them, mast, sail, oars, tubs, and water-kegs. Mr. Tilton came up while he was so engaged, and Azevedo put two irons into him; whereupon he turned upon Mr. Tilton's boat, and before they could do anything toward making their escape, he served it as he had served Mr. Baker's, but stove it completely.

There were now two boats' crews swimming about in the sea, and making away, as fast as they could, from the neighborhood of the stove boats. I tried to count heads, and although I could not be certain, because of their continual bobbing out of sight behind seas, I thought that they were all there. The truculent whale was having a good time, cutting about amid the floating

wreckage, knocking the parts of the boats out of the way with his head, and instantly slamming anything that he felt with his flukes. In this process he succeeded in getting himself thoroughly entangled in the line, so that he appeared almost as if he were enclosed in a net. Mr. Brown's boat was then called away to help, and I could not follow the fight closely, but was to get into it instead.

Meanwhile Mr. Macy had been trying to get into it. It was inviting disaster to go in and put an iron into the whale, but Mr. Macy would have done it if he could. He simply could not do it, the whale thrashed about so. At last, in his ragings, the whale saw Mr. Macy's boat just beyond the circle of wreckage, and made for it. By skilful use of the steering oar Mr. Macy avoided his rush, and Hall, the boatsteerer, seizing the whaling gun, fired a bomb into him as he passed just beyond darting distance. That was twice repeated before we came up, without noticeable effect upon the whale, and Mr. Macy had all he could do to keep the boat out of those jaws, for the whale had taken the offensive, and was doing well. I had this part of the story from George Hall, himself, after we got back to the ship.

We had been taking down an empty cask, with one of our canvas flags, such as we used on our drugs, stuck in the bung-hole. When we got as near as we could, we left this cask floating, and retired a little, putting the cask between us and the whale. The light cask, as large as a hogshead, floating high, soon drew the attention of the whale, which left Mr. Macy, and went for it. The antics of the cask under the repeated buttings of the whale were comical. It was nearly as light, in comparison

with the strength of the whale, as a football. When he struck it with his nose it gave out a resounding *Ping-g!* and leaped into the air. This exasperated him further. He could see nothing, think of nothing, but that resounding cask. He chased it, and butted it again. Again the loud, deep *Ping-g!* He butted it again and again; chased it and knocked it from side to side, made frantic by its elastic resistance. Our whole crew went into spasms of laughter, regardless of the fact that we had something else to do than to laugh at the antics of a crazy whale, and that, at any instant, he might transfer his attention to us. The loaded boat would not act as the cask did.

We edged cautiously toward the whale, Mr. Brown keeping out of his range of vision, and Mr. Macy creeping up on his other side. Mr. Macy fired another bomb into him before the Prince could dart or lance. He was prepared to do either, but at the report of Mr. Macy's gun, Mr. Brown told him to use our gun. The whale had given a little convulsive shiver on receiving the bomb, but there was no other result, although the bomb must have exploded in his in'ards somewhere, as must the other three that Hall had sent into him. The Prince fired twice, and Mr. Macy once more, which exhausted his stock of bombs; but the whale did not relax his attentions to the cask, which seemed to exert a peculiar fascination. All this time he was butting it, and it was responding with a *Ping-g!* and a leap into the air.

Suddenly he caught sight of the ship, which had borne down upon us, and was pretty near. He left the cask, headed for her, and went under. We could do nothing but watch. After butting the ship, the whale must have

come up on the other side of her, for the men on deck ran over to that side. A few seconds later I heard the reports of whaling guns — they are not to be mistaken — and then more, and Mr. Brown and Mr. Macy proceeded quietly to gather in the swimming crews, who had been in the water about an hour. We did not take the stove boats and their gear on that trip, but pulled at once to the ship.

On getting to her we found the whale dead alongside, right in position, and the men getting the fluke chain ready. He had had eleven bombs exploded in him; but what finished him was the thorough lancing by Captain Coffin, who had got out on the wales, held on by the main chains, leaned out and pumped his lance up and down in his life. The bombs must have done their work after a fashion, for before he was lanced the whale had vomited up a great number of pieces of cuttle fish. Among the pieces of squid were the remnants of a shark of good size. All the fragments had not disappeared when we got there.

Poor Peter, wet as he was, and the sailmaker had to go at once into the hold to see what damage had been done. They were down there three hours, but could find no damage, and the ship was not leaking more than she did before, which was but a few strokes a day, and just enough to keep her sweet — if a whaler can be called sweet. The whale must have struck square upon the keel, not with full force. Meanwhile we pulled back again, got the stove boats and their gear, and pulled to the ship. More work for Peter. But that whale tried out over ninety barrels.

That was the last fighting whale that we met. We

were very nearly filled up, but Captain Nelson could not seem to let well enough alone. We kept on taking whales, easily taken and of a good size, until the ship would not have held another bucket of oil anywhere. Even the try-pots were full, and the cooling-tank, and the spare pots on deck, and every receptacle that he could think of. He went so far as to get some of our water-casks on deck, empty out the water, and fill them with oil, saying that there were plenty of places where we could get water on the way home. He was going home by Cape Horn. I only wonder that he did not fill the copper dippers and the tin cans with oil. No doubt he would have done so if they had held enough to make any appreciable difference. We had over twenty-six hundred barrels of oil on board, and twenty-four hundred was all we were supposed to hold.

We bore away to the southward, intending to make Tahiti, to get more water-casks, and a fresh supply of water. Tahiti lies about southeast from our point of departure, but we were obliged to start to the south to take advantage of the trades. Peter was busy in making new boats out of the remains of the two which had been stove two or three weeks before. He did not hurry at his work, for he was pretty tired, as we all were. The rest of us did nothing to speak of, merely such patching of rigging as was necessary.

CHAPTER XXXI

THERE was no incident until we got within sight of Tahiti. I was leaning against the bench, watching Peter's leisurely progress with the boat. This boat was the one which had been cut in two by the whale. The other one was finished, painted, and bottom up on the after house. Captain Nelson meant to trade all his spare boats, which had been stove, among the islands. Not that those boats were not good and seaworthy — Peter's workmanship could not be other than that; but the captain seemed to think that they were more desirable for trading purposes than for chasing whales. I did not know about that, but there was no more chasing whales to be done on that voyage. Whaleboats were much in demand in all the islands and would bring a good price in trade. So these boats, glistening in their coats of fresh paint, were put on the after house, and covered with an old sail to keep them from blistering in the hot sun.

Peter looked up at last, and glanced ahead. When he looked down at his work again his half-smile had broadened into a grin.

'There's Tahiti, lad,' he said.

I nodded. 'Yes, I know. There's nothing to see yet.'

Peter was bending over his work, and he gave a queer chuckle.

'Oh, I don't know,' he said. 'You never can tell what you may see until you look. You might see an old friend, Timmie. A real sailor always knows what shows

above the horizon, and sometimes what's beyond, if it ain't too far.'

This speech of Peter's nettled me a little, for I thought I was a real sailor by this time. I looked around carefully. It was pretty clear, with occasional heavy clouds, and deep shadows under them. There was one such cloud away down to the northward, and I thought that I saw a vessel in its shadow. The clouds were moving briskly, and as I watched, the sun suddenly shone there, and illumined the topsail yards of a schooner and the upper half of her lower sails. It was like a spotlight in a theatre, suddenly shoving the vessel into plain view against the shadows which surrounded her. There was but one such rig in all the seven seas. It was the Annie Battles. She had left Papeete within an hour, probably, and was standing to the northward.

I sighed. 'Just our luck,' I said. 'If she had only been a few hours later!'

'Would you call it good luck, or bad, Timmie?'

'I should call it hard luck, Peter. Wouldn't you?'

'Well,' he answered slowly, 'she ain't mine, and I don't believe in looking for trouble. I suppose Cap'n Coffin calls it hard luck. You can see for yourself.' And he jerked his head in the direction of the after house.

There stood Captain Coffin, a glass glued to his eye. He said nothing, but he had no need to. Anybody could tell from his face what his thoughts were.

At Papeete we got our water, and our extra casks, although some of them had to be lashed on deck, as the hold was full. It took several days to get this done, for extra casks were not plentiful, and the men could not be

denied some liberty ashore. The pleasures that Papeete offered to our shore-famished men were alluring, and it was hard to get them back. I could understand this, for I went ashore too. I managed to resist the allurements of the place, thanks more to Peter than to any tendency on my own part to asceticism, and I had a thoroughly good time. When I got back to the ship I found that Captain Coffin had been making inquiries, and had found that the Annie Battles, under the name of the Seafoam, had sailed on a trading trip among the islands to the eastward, the Paumotus and the Marquesas. He was as excited as a boy, and full of eagerness and glee.

We got our men back at last, and sailed to the northward. I was surprised at this, for we were bound home, and for the most rapid passage around the Horn we should have started out to the southward; but I thought it likely that Captain Coffin had persuaded Captain Nelson to have a last try at the Battles. If she stopped at the islands, as she would, making frequent stops, we should be close on her heels, and might reasonably hope to catch her. At one of the Marquesas Islands, too, there was a well-known spring of very good water, emptying on the beach. Whalers often touched there for water, and it might have been in Captain Nelson's mind to fill up his casks there for the long run around the Horn.

We had been searching, in a superficial way, for a week or more, when, one morning, dawn showed us a small atoll, a few miles long. We heard the dull boom of the surf, and with the growing light we saw a long white beach, crowned with green vegetation. A few stunted coco-palms showed their green tufts, and beyond the

palms the familiar topsail yards of the Battles. There was no sign of habitation, and we found out later that this atoll was uninhabited, and visited only occasionally by canoe parties from some other atoll, in search of eggs, or fish, or adventure. At the time it seemed strange to me that somebody from the crew of the Battles had not seen us. The Clearchus must have been as familiar to them as the Battles was to us. Then I concluded that they had not seen us because they were close under the palms, and had had no lookout to seaward, and perhaps had been asleep. I was right in one thing: they had been asleep. They were not asleep now, for, as we worked around to find the opening into the lagoon, we heard faint noises, as if they were shouting to one another.

When we reached a point from which we could see into the lagoon, we saw that the schooner was plainly aground; there were a number of large canoes drawn up on the shore; and there on the beach was the crew of the Battles, surrounded by natives, and fighting for their lives. I heard no guns, and supposed that they must have been lured ashore by the prospect of trade, and then attacked.

Captain Nelson did nothing immediately, but turned to Captain Coffin. I chanced to be near them at the time.

'What do you think, Fred?' he asked. 'Shall we try to help your crew there? They're no better than pirates, and I've no doubt the Kanakas have the right of it.' Some particularly villainous example of thievery on the part of the Battles was probably at the bottom of the quarrel. 'But I suppose we've got to.'

Captain Coffin nodded. 'I want to settle their hash myself.'

I was on tiptoe with that laughing exhilaration that always came upon me before a fight of any kind, and I found that I had been afraid that Captain Nelson would stay out of it.

I dived below, where I gathered all the arms from the cabin; and, the steward helping me, I got them on deck. I found three boats down. They were Mr. Macy's, Captain Coffin's, and mine, in which the captain was going in place of Mr. Brown. There was some danger to the ship in leaving her so lightly manned, for the islanders might take it into their heads to attack her; but he took the chance. I had an oak wagon-spoke in addition to a spade. I had found it among the firewood taken on at New Bedford. A wagon-spoke is an excellent weapon, and that was not the only time I used one.

It took us some time to find the opening in the reef. There were several false leads, and we found the break narrow when we hit upon it. I wondered that the Battles had been able to get through.

The fighting was going on at the head of the lagoon, a little over half a mile from the point where we entered, too far off to see what had been happening. All we could see from that distance was a confused mass of men, and all we heard was a confused shouting. After we had straightened out on the course to the beach, I saw nothing but the backs and the oars of the men before me, Captain Nelson at the steering oar, and the other boats out of the tail of my eye. We were a little in advance.

The shouting grew in volume as we approached the

shore, but I heard no white man's shout. They had no breath to waste. We were perhaps an eighth of a mile from shore when Captain Nelson spoke quietly, saying that some twenty of the islanders were swimming out to meet us.

'Be ready with your knives and spades, boys,' he said. 'Don't let them get hold of your oars.'

The men were not supposed to have knives — at least, not with sharp points, but two or three of the Portuguese produced them, and took them between their teeth; and there were two knives in each boat, and the hatchet.

However, we pulled away from them and grounded on the beach. The shock of it very nearly sent me on my back in the bottom of the boat. I saw Captain Nelson covering our landing with his Spencer, and I saw him raise it to his shoulder and fire once. Then we tumbled out, I with my spade and my wagon-spoke. A spear whistled over my shoulder, making a flesh wound, and I gave a roar, and rushed upon the irregular line of islanders. As I ran, I remember vaguely that I laughed and shouted.

I have no clear recollection of what happened, but I do know that I had no fear of anything, I had an utter insensibility to pain, and a fierce joy in mere fighting. My wagon-spoke was a more handy weapon than the spade, which I used to ward off blows aimed at me, while I wielded the wagon-spoke as a club. It was a very good club, well-balanced and heavy, with sharp corners on the hub end. I was pretty strong then, and could swing it to some purpose. The natives — I do not like to call them savages — had been armed with spears of hard wood, as dangerous as steel-pointed spears, and

with a war-club of peculiar shape, made of ironwood. Most of them had cast their spears by this time, and fought with their clubs, much as I did.

I do not know just how many islanders there were, but there must have been well over a hundred altogether. There were eighteen of us, and about twenty in the crew of the Battles; but many of the Battles' men had been killed or disabled before we got there. There could not have been more than a half a dozen left on their feet. I saw Mr. Wallet transfixed by a spear within six feet of me, the spear in the hands of a gigantic islander. I cannot remember that I felt a pang of pity when I saw Mr. Wallet go down. I do not think that I had any feeling whatever, or that I should have had whoever it had been.

The man next to Mr. Wallet was evidently of a different calibre. He was bleeding from many wounds, and fighting like a fiend. The man with the spear wrenched it free from Wallet's body, and lunged at this man. He leaped forward, tore the spear from the other's grasp, and like lightning he plunged it into his body. It went clear through and came out at the back. It could not be got out again, as there were deep cuts upon it, making a series of saw-teeth on the edge of the long blade, and these teeth stuck on the ribs. He left it sticking there, looked quickly around, and caught sight of Captain Coffin. Apparently he had not seen him before.

I found out a little later that the man was Drew, but I guessed as much then. He stood still for a moment, and I saw the changing expressions chase each other across his face. There was despair — for an instant — and then a hardening, and the fierce light came back to his

eyes, and a scornful smile curled his lips, but hope was gone. Here was Coffin. That meant that he would be carried back and hanged if he survived this fight. He had to die, anyway, and he preferred to die fighting; but there were two or three of us that he meant to take with him. His first move was against Captain Coffin, who was engaged in a hand-to-hand fight with two natives. These natives, I think, were not much given to hand-to-hand work. They preferred to stand off at a safe distance from their enemies and call names. In this case they had depended upon their numbers, and had been drawn into the close work and could not get out; but they were brave, although they preferred the method of ambush and massacre.

Up to this time I had been in a condition of exaltation with the pure love of fighting. Man is a fighting animal. If he were not he would never have got so far. Whether right or wrong, it seems to me hopeless to try to crush out that instinct — but that is by the way. The events just described had made their impression on my eye, but at the time they made none on my brain. Now I roused from my daze, my brain resumed its activity with a rush, and I yelled a warning.

Captain Coffin either did not hear me or did not dare to turn his head. Drew had grabbed up a war-club lying beside a dead savage, and was trying to get at him, but his way was not clear. I leaped for him and yelled again. Other islanders were coming to the help of those engaged with Captain Coffin, and he was becoming the centre of the fighting. He was much the biggest white man there. Macy was nearly as tall, but did not give the impression of bigness and power that Captain Coffin did. I caught

a glimpse of Mr. Macy coming up on the other side of Captain Coffin, and remember wondering what had become of the Prince. It was the kind of a fight that I had imagined he would love. At the risk of my life I glanced about, and saw him just behind me, as if he was following to see that no harm came to me. There was the gleam of battle in his eye, his face was set, his lips drawn back in a tiger-snarl, showing his white teeth. They shone in his ebony face like a light at sea on a dark night.

Captain Coffin might have heard my warning yells, but he gave no sign. It would have been death for him to look back. Drew was slowly making his way toward him, striking at the natives who got in his way. A big native disputed the way, and I got almost within reach. The islander gave before Drew's ferocious assault. Drew let him go, and pressed on toward Captain Coffin. I leaped again, and got within reach as he was in the act of bringing his club down on Captain Coffin's head. I struck with all my might, and the blow went true. Drew's wrist was broken, his head was laid open in a long line, and he tottered. At that instant I heard the dull report of a Spencer. Drew's body whirled about, and crumpled in a heap. Captain Nelson had done it, and the bullet had gone through Drew's body, striking down one of the natives.

Relieved of the anxiety of the moment, I dropped my hands, and drew a long breath. That was no time for dropping my hands, and I was brought quickly back to the present by the prick of a spear. I squirmed away, and looked up to see a club descending. There was no time to use my club, or to raise my spade, which hung in my left hand. There was a rush beside me, and the

Prince, apparently empty-handed, launched himself at my assailant. My head was saved, and both went down, just out of my reach. The Prince had broken his lance, but had saved the blade, which he plunged into the throat of the islander. At the same instant an ironwood war-club crashed down on his head.

At that sight my fury returned. I have no knowledge of what followed in the next half-hour. I knew that not one of the Battles' crew was left on his feet, and I knew dimly that Kane was on one side of me, fighting with a wild joy, and that on the other Mr. Macy was fighting with equal fury. I have no doubt that he saved my life many times, for I knew no caution, and my only thought was to avenge the Prince. Mr. Macy's fury was of the cold kind — a cool head and a hot heart — which does so much more damage than a mere blind rage like mine. At last I realized that the islanders were trying to get at our boats.

There were five or six times as many of them as of us, but Captain Nelson managed to keep his force between them and our boats. None of his men was killed except the Prince, but nearly all were wounded more or less seriously, and all were weary. I know that, at last, with returning sanity, I found myself hardly able to lift my club, and utterly unable to strike again with my reddened spade. We were being forced back to the boats. It looked like a day for the islanders, and if they would have let us we would have withdrawn. I heard nothing but a tumult of sound, and I could not see well

Suddenly there was a great shout from behind the natives, and I saw a considerable body of men break through the sparse vegetation which crowned the beach.

It happened before my eyes; a crowd of men — white men, twenty-five or thirty of them — armed with lances, spades, and knives, issuing from that tangle to seaward, and rushing down on the rear of the islanders. They, poor chaps, gave one glance, then broke and ran. Some of them ran to their canoes, others ran directly into the water, and swam away, full tilt. The canoes followed, and we let them go.

I was dimly conscious of a young chap who walked around me, looking me over, but I paid him no attention. At last he stood still before me, grinning. He poked me in the ribs, I squirmed, for my ribs were sore.

'Hello, Tim,' he said.

I looked at him then; looked at him long and hard, while he stood and grinned. It was Jimmy Appleby.

CHAPTER XXXII

Of that meeting with Jimmy Appleby the less said the better. I believe that, in my wearied and weakened state, I broke down and cried, but I have no clear recollection. The first thing that I remember clearly is being well down the lagoon, a passenger in my own boat. Our new shipmates were doing the pulling, although those of the regular crew who were able sat on the thwarts beside the fresh men, and bent their backs with them. Two of our men, severely wounded, lay on the bottom of the boat, half under the thwarts, and there, too, was the body of the Prince, covered with the sail. Captain Nelson stood at the steering oar, his face grave and set, looking out ahead. I crawled up to my place on the midship thwart beside a stranger, and got my hands on my oar; and the stranger turned his head and gave me a smile.

We got safely out of the lagoon to sea, and on board the ship. The canoes were far down to leeward. They had given the ship a wide berth, but might come back again, after we had gone, to pick up their dead. I did not know what customs they practised in that respect. I know I was surprised to find that it was not yet noon. It seemed to me that almost a lifetime had passed since we had left the ship that morning. The wounded were cared for at once. Then the body of the Prince was passed up, and laid on the hatch cover. I drew near to it, and found Peter beside me. I had forgotten Jimmy Appleby.

Peter said nothing, but he laid his arm across my shoulders, and we saw the sailmaker come with a piece of old canvas, and his palm, and stitch the Prince up carefully, a few links of old chain cable at his feet. I saw the crew gathering with bared heads, and Captain Nelson standing with a little book, but I did not hear what he read. The man in that long white bundle — it shone dazzlingly in the hot sunshine — would not have been there except for me. I hid my face in my arm against the rigging, hot tears burned my eyes, and my shoulders shook; there was a gentle noise of canvas slipping on wood, a splash, and I raised my head to see Captain Nelson clapping his book shut, and the men as they turned away.

Peter patted my shoulder. 'Don't ye grieve, lad,' he said. 'He'd have liked this way of it better. He was a good shipmate, if his skin was black. Come now, you're wanted. A bite of dinner 'll do you a world of good.'

At that I am afraid I laughed. It was hysterical, but I was quieted somewhat, and I went below.

I had not yet had a chance to hear Jimmy's story. It had to wait still longer, for the boats were sent ashore again in the afternoon, with all the new men, and some of ours. They buried the men of the Battles as well as they could. It was almost impossible to dig in that beach, for it was all coral below the very surface. Then they carried their boats across from the ocean side to the lagoon, not more than three or four hundred feet, but the low summit thickly grown up with coconut-palms and low bushes and vines. It must have reminded Captain Coffin of the 'haulover' at Nantucket, except

for the growth. The 'haulover' is nothing but bare sand, and I believe the sea had not broken through at that time. These boats which I speak of were those in which our new friends had come. I should not speak of them as our new friends, for many of them were old friends.

Captain Coffin, with a boat's crew, stayed on the Battles that night, looking her over. Jimmy did not, and I got his story. He was bursting with it. His ship was the John and Alice. After I left New Bedford his desire for the same sort of life, always strong, had become intense. He gave his parents no peace for nearly two years, finally threatening to run away if they would not let him go. They gave in at that, and in the summer of 1874 he shipped before the mast on the John and Alice. They had been out just about a year, had cruised off the River Plate, doubled the Horn, and covered the On Shore and Off Shore grounds. They were making their leisurely way toward Japan when the John and Alice was sunk by a whale in 145° W., 7° S., carrying their five hundred barrels of oil down with her. The crew took to the boats. There had been time to stow plenty of provisions and water in the boats, and they were making for Tahiti, which they would have reached safely, without doubt. But they sighted some of these low-lying islands, and went in among them. They had been sailing through the passages of the archipelago for two days. At daylight on that morning they saw the topmasts of the Clearchus showing dimly in the distance, and the topmasts of the Battles and the coco-palms soon rose. They were making for the ship, passing just outside the line of surf which fringed the

island, when they heard our tumult, and landed the best way they could. They managed it, but lost one of their boats in the surf, capsized and pretty badly stove. The surf had not been heavy, or they would have lost more, and possibly some men. Captain Nelson had the stove boat brought aboard for Peter's surgery.

Of course Jimmy's narrative was not so briefly told as I have given it. He was discursive and conversational, and given to embellishment. I kept him up until late that night, telling me all he knew of my mother, my father, my brothers, Tom and Josh; and I asked him about all my friends, ending up with Ann McKim. About Ann he was enthusiastic, speaking of her in the slang of the day. I forget what expression he used, but it corresponded to 'perfect peach.' I could well believe it.

Captain Coffin had found the Annie Battles pretty firmly aground, and the coral had punched a hole in her. It was not a hopeless hole, although enough to justify any master in abandoning his vessel. Captain Coffin was not that kind. All the stuff was taken out of her, and spread on the beach. Then she was hastily patched on the inside, and pumped out. That was very nearly enough to float her, but not quite, for the rise of the tide at this point is small. Still there was that little peak of hard, sharp coral, which they were afraid would tear out more of her planking when eight boats were fast, with forty oars pulling at her. Our Kanakas had to go down and cut away the coral. Then she was beached, and hove down by our cutting-tackles from her mast-heads to coconut-trunks. Her cutting-tackles had disappeared — probably thrown overboard.

It took two weeks to get the Battles beached and repaired. Then we got her afloat again, the topmasts and yards sent up, sails bent and everything shipshape. With all her cargo — mostly trading stuff — piled on deck, we towed her out through the pass in the reef, and she was at sea again, where she belonged. She tied up alongside the Clearchus, and there began a wholesale transfer of cargo.

The Battles first stowed eight hundred barrels of our oil, greatly relieving us. Most of her cargo of trading stuff had been taken on the Clearchus, indicating that we were likely to stop at the Marquesas, and possibly at some other islands. I was gratified at that, for I wanted to see the Marquesas. The division of water and provisions was unequal, the Battles being given enough to carry her home, while the Clearchus would be obliged to fill her water-casks, at least. At last she was ready to go. She cast off, for the sea, which had been unusually quiet all through the transfer, began to roughen. She did not go far, however, but lay hove to, not far from us. Captain Coffin was in the cabin with Captain Nelson, and I was sent for.

I had watched the transfer of cargo and the selection of a crew for the Battles, with a mind at ease. I had taken it for granted that she would take the new men, and most of their boats. Jimmy was going, I knew, and I accepted the fact with small regret, for I found that a separation of three years had severed many of the ties which had bound us together. I went into the cabin with no small wonder what they could want of me; probably nothing more than the same old bluish-white pitcher, with something hot in it.

That was not what they wanted. I was hardly in the cabin when Captain Coffin asked me whether I wanted to go with him. He added that he was going aboard the Battles within a few minutes, and if I wished, he would take me along. I was too dumbfounded to answer immediately, and Captain Nelson, taking my answer for granted, sent me out again at once, saying that I had only time to get my things together, and to hurry, at that. So I found myself outside the cabin door, stumbling up the stairs, without having uttered a word. I hurried and got my belongings into my chest, carried the chest out, and went to bid a hasty good-bye to Peter, without having come to a decision. There was a certain reluctance in my actions. I wanted more time; yes, more time, at least. But still I went. I said half a dozen words to Peter, and half a dozen words to Mr. Brown, whom I met on my way aft.

If I had known the truth — and been willing to tell it, which is quite a different matter — and if it had been a question merely of choosing between Mr. Brown and Jimmy, I should have chosen Mr. Brown. Of course I was glad to see Jimmy, but he was only a boy, with a boy's interest in things, and that did not satisfy me, possibly because I had been so long without companions of my own age. Mr. Brown seemed much more of a real companion, with interests which had come to be my own. I never saw him again.

It is a curious thing how people go out of your life. Here was Mr. Brown, who, alone of the officers, had admitted me to intimacy. I had become very fond of him; and he dropped out as suddenly and as completely as if he had fallen overboard. I do not like it. It is not right,

I cannot reconcile myself to it, and I have never been able to understand it. For years I kept expecting to see him, but it is not likely now, for he would be nearly eighty, and probably he is dead long ago. He left the ship at once upon her arrival in New Bedford, and vanished. Why? I wish I knew. I found, upon inquiry, that his share of the voyage — his lay — was sent to an address in New York. I wrote, but nothing was known of him, and that ended the chapter.

Peter I did see again. He became a frequent and welcome visitor at my father's house, and later at my own. Ann McKim liked him, and she, my father, my mother, and Peter spent many an evening in going over the events of the voyage, a chart spread out, and all four heads bent over it. I sat back in the shadows and watched them. But I am getting ahead of my story. There is not much more to tell, so have a little patience, and it will be over.

I was still in a sort of daze when I got aboard of the Battles, and she began to drop the Clearchus. I watched the old ship, with all sail set, sink below the horizon. When I could no longer make out even her topgallant yards, I turned, and went slowly below. I was to bunk in the cabin, I found, as Assistant Navigator, a totally unnecessary berth. Captain Coffin had two of the mates of the John and Alice, both good navigators, and he was a good navigator, of course; but there was room in the cabin for four, and he, in the kindness of his heart, gave the fourth berth to me. Before we got home I was made third mate, which was simply ridiculous. Probably Captain Coffin wished to make it easy for me to get a third mate's berth on another voyage, which

was kind and thoughtful. The Annie Battles was much overmanned, with a total of twenty-eight men, leaving forty-two on the Clearchus. With so many men there was not much for any one to do, although we managed to keep the men busy enough.

The run home was without incident worthy of remark. We reached Cape Horn in January, the middle of the southern summer, and had no great difficulty and no more bad weather than is always met there. In the cabin, as I was, although not yet a mate, I could not chum with Jimmy, who was before the mast, and I found it rather a lonesome berth. There was nothing for me to do but attend to my duties, which were light, and watch the schooner sail. She was a very fast and easy vessel, and very wet in a sea; but she was not in the same class as the Virginia, Marshall, master. If I had not had that experience I should have enjoyed the Battles more. But I missed the discipline, the trimness, the everlasting rightness of the Virginia. Having seen that, nothing less would ever satisfy me completely.

It was when we crossed the line that I was made third mate. Not long after, in the latitude of about 15° N., we ran into a gale, which started the seams of the patch on the bottom. No doubt Cape Horn weather had something to do with it, but we had had no proper planking to mend it with, and it was rather weak. That started a leak which increased from day to day. With our extra men, Captain Coffin hoped that we could pump her home; but by the time we were off Hatteras it had increased so much that the men were kept steadily at the pumps, and we put into Norfolk.

I left the Battles at Norfolk. I was anxious to get home, and could not even wait for the boat, which would have been cheaper. I went by train, and got in at the old wooden station on Pearl Street — 'deepo' we called it, early Egyptian architecture — with less than a dollar in my pocket. It was only a few blocks from my home, however, and what use had I for money? I ran all the way.

As I turned the last corner, I stopped with a gasp. I had barely escaped running into a girl — and such a girl! I knew her at once, although she had blossomed since I went away, and she was wearing no ostrich plume in her hat. Jimmy had not exaggerated.

She had stopped, too. She had to, for I brought to directly in front of her.

'Oh,' she said, with a little smile, 'I beg your pardon.'

'Ann!' I said breathlessly. 'Ann McKim, don't you know me?'

I put out my hand, and her hand came slowly forward to meet it, while she looked up at me doubtfully. I watched the changing expression of her eyes. Recognition came into them suddenly, and she clasped my hand warmly.

'Goody gracious!' she cried. 'It's Tim, I do believe! It's not strange that I didn't know you! How you've grown and broadened! I might have taken you for your father. You're as big as he is.'

'Am I?' I grinned, holding to her hand as if it were my mooring. 'Am I, Ann?'

'And you're the color of new copper,' she added. 'Have you been home yet?'

I shook my head. 'I was just going there when I nearly ran you down.'

'Well, go along, Timmie, for mercy's sake, and let your mother get a sight of you.' She freed her hand gently, and gave me a little push. 'Do they expect you?'

'No, I came by train. It'll be a surprise.'

'Why didn't you let them know?'

'Didn't think of it. We — but I'll tell you all about it —'

'To-night. I'll come in pretty late — nearly nine o'clock. Good-bye.'

She was gone around the corner before I could say a word. I gaped at the corner, then ran on again. Our house was only a little way up the street. Nobody locked their doors in those days, and dashing up the steps without stopping, I threw open the front door. I stood for a moment, with my hand on the doorknob, listening for a sound to let me know where anybody was. How often I had done just that! My mother might be in the kitchen, or upstairs in her room, sewing. I heard nothing but a faint humming.

'Mother!' I called.

The humming continued. 'Who's that?' my mother answered, as if she was busy. 'Tom or Josh? I never can tell you apart by your voices. What are you home for now? Is anything the matter?'

I snickered nervously. 'It's me, mother. It's Tim.'

The humming stopped suddenly. 'What! It's who?'

I snickered again. I knew so well just how she looked, stopping her sewing, her foot on the treadle, and her head up, listening.

'It's Tim. I'm coming up.'

There was a shriek, and the sound of a chair falling. I bounded up the stairs, and met her. At sight of me she stopped for an instant.

'Mercy!' she cried. 'Is that my little Tim?'

Then her arms were around me, and she was laughing and crying on my shoulder.

THE END